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THE AMERICANS AT HOME.



Linley Sambourne.

John Saddler.

NOT A DROP MORE, MAJOR,
UNLESS IT'S SWEETEN'D.

(Page 179.)

THE
AMERICANS AT HOME;

OR,

BYEWAYS, BACKWOODS, AND PRAIRIES.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK,"
"THE OLD JUDGE," "NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE,"
"WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES,"
ETC. ETC.



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PREFACE.

THIS work is designed as a companion to "Traits of American Humour." The sketches it contains are confined, as expressed in the title-page, to the Byeways, Backwoods, and Prairies. The large cities and vast rivers and railroads of the United States are not only well known to all tourists, but to the reading public generally. Unfortunately travellers, on account of the facility, safety, and comfort of transit, confine themselves to the great public thoroughfares, whereby they add but little to the stock of information they previously possessed. The peculiarities of the people, their modes of thinking, living, and acting, are principally to be sought for in the rural districts, where unrestrained freedom of action, and the incidents and requirements of a forest life, encourage and give room for the development of character in its fullest extent.

The populous towns are so similar in their general aspect and structure that a description of any one city will commonly be found applicable in the main to every other in the same State. Age, gradual or premature, is apparent in all. The people have become homogeneous. Staid and settled habits have superseded the foreign modes introduced by a heterogeneous mass of emigrants, and the bustle of building and settling has given place to the indispensable cares and duties of life. Collision soon wears off angularity, the surface is rendered smooth, and a certain degree of polish, according to the texture of the materials, is the natural result. Society has its conventional rules, which it rigidly enforces. Hence in every community men dress alike, think alike, and act alike, except in such cases where by the same rules they are allowed to agree or to disagree.

In the country, and especially that portion situated on the confines of the forest, man, on the contrary, is under no such restraint. He is almost beyond the reach of the law, and altogether exempt from the control, or utterly ignorant or regardless, of those observances which public opinion demands and enforces. The only society he knows or

PREFACE.

acknowledges is that of his own family. He enacts the laws that are to regulate his household. He governs, but owns no obedience. His neighbours, if those can be so called who live several miles from him, aid him in those emergencies for which his individual strength is insufficient, or sustain him in those trials that require the sympathy and kindness of his fellow-creatures, while they occasionally unite with him in hunting, fishing, drinking, or carousing.

These pioneers do not, as might be supposed, so much present samples of a class as a collection of isolated independent individuals, whose characters are distinguished alike for being strongly developed, and yet widely dissimilar. Nevertheless there are many striking peculiarities that pervade the entire population. They all have the virtues and the vices inseparable from unrestrained liberty. They are bold, hardy, manly, hospitable, generous, and kind-hearted; while, at the same time, they are violent and vindictive in temper, reckless, improvident, often intemperate, and almost always without local attachment. They value their "locations" more for the facilities of hunting, and the exemption they afford from all restraint, than for the fertility of the soil or their fitness for forming a family home.

As the animals of the adjacent woods recede, and the wave of emigration reaches their boundaries, they are ready, like the aborigines, to dispose of their 'improvements,' and, without a sigh of regret for what they leave behind them, to seek a new home in the depths of the forest. The outskirts of civilization whereon they dwell, and the newly-settled territories of which they are in advance, present a wide field for the picturesque delineation of men and character, and the Americans have availed themselves of it with more skill, freedom, accuracy, and humour than any strangers who have attempted it.

The following sketches I found dispersed through a variety of local publications and the productions of the daily press. Of the latter, "The Spirit of the Times," a New York paper, devoted to sporting and humour, and sustained with singular ability, as well as at a vast expense, furnished many of the best articles. Of the former, though well known in the United States, but one or two have ever found their way to England, as they generally contained others of a less interesting or inferior character. I have, however, found the field, even restricted as it is to the "Byeways, Backwoods, and Prairies," more extensive than it at first appeared to be. There are classes and scenes of diversified interest yet untouched, the sketches of which I regret that I have not been able to compress within the limits of this work.

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THE AMERICANS AT HOME.

I.

THE PRE-EMPTION RIGHT; OR, DICK KELSY'S RIGHT TO HIS LAND CLAIM.

DICK KELSY was one of the earliest settlers in the Upper Missouri country, and a more open-hearted or careless son of Kentucky never squatted in the "Far West." He had wandered from his parent State more for a change of location than any desire to improve his condition, and if a spot offered easy hunting facilities, it mattered not what contingencies were added, Dick "*sot* himself down *thar*." Tall, raw-boned, good-natured, and fearless, he betrayed no ambition to excel, except in his rifle, and the settlers generally conceded that his "shoot-ing-iron" *was* particularly *certain*! A spot upon one of the tributaries of the Missouri won Dick's heart at first sight—it bordered upon a beautiful stream; had a far-spreading prairie, skirted by a fine grove of timber, for a landscape; and abounded with all sorts of game, from a prairie fowl to an *Indian*. Here Dick built his cabin, beneath the shadow of his own *cotton* tree; and he used to tell his neighbours that nature had, after practising on the rest of creation, spread her finishing touches on his claim. Its wild beauty deserved his lavish praise.

In this western habitation our hero held undisturbed sway, his only companion being a negro slave, who was at once his master's attendant and friend. Kelsy and the negro had been raised together, and from association, although so opposite their positions, had imbibed a lasting affection for each other,—each would have freely shed blood in the other's defence. The bonds of servitude were, consequently, moulded into links of friendship and affection, securing to them a feeling of confid-

ence in their lonely habitation in the wilderness. Their nearest neighbours were situated at a small trading settlement, some ten miles distant, where Dick always repaired to exchange his furs for ammunition and other essentials. Here he also learned the news from the far-off seat of government; but the busy world beyond little interested these roving sons of the western forests,—a brush with the *red skins*, or a challenge shooting match, possessed much more interest for them. At length, however, these western pioneers were aroused from their quietude and inactivity by the news that Congress had passed the famous *Pre-emption Law*. As yet none in the region we write of knew its provisions, or, distinctly, what rights it conferred; each squatter, therefore, laid out the bounds of his claim in accordance with his own desire, and stood ready to defend the title against all encroachments. The fever of emigration became an epidemic, and soon that speculating mania, which, in imagination, built fortunes in a day, spread even to the confines of civilization. The axe of the pioneer soon began to startle the wild denizens of the forest, where for ages the hunter alone had disturbed their repose.

One bright morning a *ripple* of the advancing tide, in the persons of two strangers, was discovered by Dick about a quarter of a mile from his cabin, where, apparently, they had rested for the night. The first was a man about middle stature, of a dark swarthy complexion, with an easy eye, prominent teeth, and clad in a dilapidated suit of Kentucky jean; an old chip hat surmounted his figure, and in his right hand he held the sceptre of the pioneer—a *rifle*! His companion was a pale sickly-looking little woman, clad in a coarse linsey-woolsey gown, and in her hand she held a faded calico sun-bonnet; close by stood a small waggon, with a quilt cover, to which was harnessed a horse, bearing evident marks of long travel and hard fare.

“How are you, strangers?” was Dick’s first query. “Judgin’ from appearances, you’re lookin’ out a location.”

“Yes,” replied the man, in a surly tone, “I’ve been lookin’ all along, but I aint found any yet fit fur a *white man*.”

“Well, you’ve jest got to the spot now,” says Dick. “Creation aint laid out any place prettier, and arter takin’ a view of it, you’ll say so. You and the missus better go up to my cabin, and rest till you can take a good look at its best *pints*, and I predicate you’ll come to a conclusion.”

“Well, guess I’ll stay a spell,” was the stranger’s response; and, following Dick, he was introduced beneath the Ken-

tuckian's hospitable roof, after which Dick started to the settlement for some notions with which to entertain them more comfortably. On his arrival the whole conversation at the settlement was the *pre-emption act*, and during the debate on its merits, he mentioned the "new arrival" in his neighbourhood of the strangers. They had passed through the settlement, and as all new comers are a subject of interest, various opinions were expressed in regard to these.

"Judgin' from that stranger's frontispiece," said one, I "shouldn't like him fur a near neighbour."

"He's rayther a sour lookin' customer," added another; "and how dreadful poorly his wife looks!"

"I've invited him to locate near me," remarked Kelsy, "and I can't say he's got a very pleasin' look; but the rough shell may have a good kernel, boys."

After providing necessities, Dick gave the settlers an invitation to come up and help the stranger to raise a cabin. All agreed to be *thar* on the next Saturday, and homeward he started. On his arrival, Sam was cooking the evening meal of wild game and corn bread, all the time expatiating to the guests what a good man "Massa Dick" was, and particularly impressing upon their minds that he (Sam) was "Massa Dick's 'strordinary niggah!" Sam's efforts at amusement failed upon the strangers, for one was quietly weeping, while the other wore a scowl of anger. Dick noticed their looks on entering, and endeavoured to cheer them.

"Don't look down-hearted, strangers," said he, "you aint *among* Ingins ef you are *near* 'em; *thar* aint a spot in the universal yearth calkilated to make you feel better than whar you are now. Sam and me never felt bad sence we located here—only when the Ingins penned us in the cabin fur three days, while all our *bar meat* was hanging on the outside."

"It's this cussed woman," answered the stranger, "that makes me feel bad—she's eternally whimperin' about bein' so fur from home—I wish she was in h-ll!"

"Stop that, stranger," said Dick, in a determined tone; "the love I have for an old Kentucky mother won't permit me to see or hear one of her sex abused beneath my cabin roof, ef it is in the wilderness; I don't like red skins, none of 'em, but even a *squaw* couldn't be abused here!"

"Well, I'm done," was the reply. "I'll git a cabin of my own, and then I guess I'll do as I please."

"No you won't," said Dick; "ef you stay in these diggins

and abuse her, you're in a hotter place than whar you jest now wished her."

It may be supposed that the host and his guest retired, the first night of their meeting, with no favourable impression of each other; and while Sam and his master were making all right for the night, the former ventured to remark—

"Dar aint much good in *dat* white man, Massa Dick."

"Not a *heap*, Sam," was his master's reply; "but he shan't pisin us long with his company;" and with this comfortable resolve they turned in for the night.

At daylight Dick started out with his rifle on his arm, to observe the foot-prints around his dwelling, and note whether they were biped or quadruped, the close proximity of the Indian tribes and their frequent thefts making caution and care necessary to preserve not only property but life. As he was returning to his cabin, a *scream* startled him from his careless gait; it was a new sound in that wilderness, and many a day had passed since Dick heard anything akin to it. He started forward with a bound, convulsively clutching his rifle, while his blood, urged into rapid action by the movement, was again forced back to his heart, chilled by another fearful scream of a woman in distress. In a moment he emerged from the strip of woods, within view of his cabin, and there beheld the stranger with his arm raised to strike; fronting him stood Sam, poising a large hunting knife in defence; while upon the other arm of the muscular negro hung the trembling form of the stranger's sickly wife. A few moments and Dick was beside the combatants, inquiring the cause of their hostile attitude. When Sam informed him that the stranger had twice, with his fist, felled the woman to the earth, his rifle was raised instinctively to his shoulder, as if justice demanded instant and dreadful punishment for such a dastard act. Dick slowly remarked, as he directed his arm—

"I'll sarve you out, you infernal *savage*!"

The stricken wife, observing the action, threw herself before the weapon, imploring the enraged host to spare her husband's life.

"Well, woman is woman," soliloquized Dick; "for they'll stick to the devil, ef they ever take a notion to him. If you have the least hankerin' arter the mean varmint, in course I'll let him *slide*; but he must clar out of my diggins—I can't be near whar anythin' of this breed grows—so arter breakfast we'll separate."

When the morning meal was ended, the stranger drew up

his waggon, thrust his companion into it, and sullenly departed, muttering a threatening farewell.

"God help that poor creatur," said Dick, as his late guests disappeared from view, "*she's got a hard row to hoe*; and as for that serpent with her, he'd better keep out of my tracks. I should be mightily tempted to sarch his carcass to see ef he had a heart in it. Sam," continued he, "*you're a nigger*, but thar's more real white man under your black skin than could be found in an acre of such varmints as that *sucker*. Give me your fist, old fellar; while Dick Kelsy's got anythin' in this world, you shall share it!"

While this bond of closer friendship was being formed between master and slave, malice was holding her revel in the heart of their late guest. He had observed Dick's love for the spot where he had squatted, and judging rightly that he had neglected to file his claim to it in the Land Office, he stopped a short distance below him, intending to remain, and if possible to gain possession of it. Kelsy had his dislike for the stranger increased by finding him remain on his section, and he ordered him to leave forthwith. The stranger gave as an excuse, that his wife was so sick that she couldn't travel, and ended with a request that he would let him erect a hut to shelter her, while he went in search of a permanent location. In pity for *her*, Dick consented, and the stranger proceeded to prepare timber for a small cabin. The following Saturday, the neighbours gathered, and by nightfall placed a roof over their heads, kindly supplied them with some necessaries, and left, each more confirmed in his dislike for the stranger. The next morning he started off, as many supposed, never to return; the natural kindness of the settlers was immediately manifested towards his wife, and nothing that would conduce to her comfort was lacking in the cabin of this heart-broken woman.

After the lapse of several days, contrary to all expectation, the stranger returned, and a visible change was manifested in his manner—his surliness assumed a more impudent and offensive character; and on receiving a further intimation that it was time he was *moving*, he insolently told Dick to "clear out" himself, for that he (the stranger) was the rightful owner of the claim. Dick laughed at him, and told him to be off quietly, that his carcass was safe while that woman clung to him.

Kelsy was laughing next day, down at the settlement, as he related the stranger's words, and described his insolent bearing; but his smile of scorn was turned to a frown of wrath, when the land agent, who happened to hear him, informed the

unsuspecting squatter that the stranger had indeed entered the claim his cabin was upon. Dick, on hearing this news, shivered the bottle in his hand to atoms; and, drawing his breath through his teeth until it fairly whistled, he remarked—

“That stranger may have *some* of my claim, but his share shall be my *signature to the title*.”

The sun was fast sinking when Dick started home, rather limber from the effects of wrath and liquor. Having resigned himself to the care of his horse, he swung from side to side, in a state of dozing unconsciousness. When he neared his cabin, it had become pitch dark; to which, if possible, the woods bordering his claim added a gloomier shade. The instant his horse entered beneath the foliage, a sharp pain shot through the side of the rider, so acute as to wake his powers suddenly into full consciousness. The spring he made in the saddle started his horse forward into a rapid gait, and in an instant more a sickly sensation robbed him of all consciousness. When he opened his eyes with returning animation, his look fell upon his faithful slave, who was bending, with an anxious countenance, over the rude couch of his master.

“Bress God! Massa Dick, you knows Sam, your ole nigga—I sees you does—dars life in you yet, massa—dar is; but dis poor nigga had a’most gib you up, for sartain!”

An unseen hand had, in the darkness, plunged a knife into Dick’s body, as he entered the wood; he had clung to his horse’s mane, until the animal stopped at his cabin door, where Sam, waiting for his master, had caught his bleeding and unconscious body in his arms as it fell reeling from the saddle. The faithful negro had stanchd the blood, and applied every restorative his rude knowledge could devise; but it was long ere the eyes he so loved opened to the recollection of past events and present injury.

“That was a foul dig in the ribs, Sam,” murmured his exhausted master; “but ef I don’t trail up the sarpint and pull his sting out, it’ll be because I and that ar old rifle of mine has to part company!”

The natural strength of the patient, together with Sam’s careful nursing, soon restored him to his legs, and a few days’ gentle exercise imparted strength enough to his frame to support the weight of his rifle. A fixed resolve to trace the assassin added a severe cast to Dick’s pale features—Sam, as he observed him, quietly shook his head with the remark,

“Ah, ah! Massa Dick’s soon goin’ Ingin huntin’—*sure!*”

One morning early, Kelsy ordered Sam to saddle his horse.

and proceeded himself to clean his rifle; with more than usual care he adjusted each particular of his accoutrements, and started off to the settlement, taking the road leading by his neighbour's cabin. On his arrival, he gathered a few of his cronies together, who all knew of the dastardly attempt on his life, and imparted to them a scheme he had been maturing, for discovering if the stranger was the "stabber in the dark,"—which few seemed to doubt, but of which he wished to be certain.

As the sun inclined to the west, Kelsy made preparation for return, and, changing his dress for a suit belonging to one of his friends, he stuffed his own with straw, surmounted the figure with his fur cap, and mounted it upon his horse before him, where it was secured to the saddle; four of his friends accompanied him, and, thus prepared, they bent their course towards Dick's cabin. Night set in while they were on their march, and soon the moon rose, casting her soft light over a prairie landscape, as beautiful as ever the eye of man rested upon. It was a western scene of wild and picturesque loveliness, grand in its vastness of extent, and rich in its yet-hidden resources. Its lonely quietude was calculated to subdue the wild passions which throbbed in the hearts of those who now broke its stillness; but a glance at the firm features of the party proved that its beauty was unheeded by them as they swept onward to the dread business of their march. When within a mile of Dick's habitation, they halted in a secluded hollow, where they resigned their horses to the care of one of the party, with instructions to turn Kelsy's horse loose about the time he supposed they, by a circuitous route, on foot, had reached the woods, and when he heard a shot, to follow with their other horses. Dick and his companions stole unperceived beneath the shadow of the wood, and cautiously approached the trail leading to his cabin; ere they had reached the spot, however, one of the party descried the horse leisurely wending his way across a strip of prairie, the figure seated upon his back swaying from side to side, so like his owner when "half sprung," that they could with difficulty suppress a laugh. The sound of the horse's hoofs brought from concealment another figure, whose form was indistinctly visible, emerging from behind a thick covert; and the excitement of the moment, at thus having securely trapped the offender, had almost discovered them—their game, however, was too intent on his purpose, or he would have heard the slight exclamation which burst from the lips of one of the party. Moving stealthily to

a good position he awaited horse and rider, and taking deliberate aim, *fired*. No movement of the figure indicated a *hit*, and the party could hear his exclamation of disappointment. The horse sauntered along undisturbed by the report, perceiving which the assassin hastily reloaded, while Dick and his friends crept up unperceived almost to his side. Raising his rifle again, he steadily poised his aim, and pulled the trigger—erect the figure held its place, and resting his rifle upon the ground, he exclaimed—

“I’ve *hit* him, or he’s the *devil himself*!”

“I guess it’s the old gentleman come for you, stranger,” said Dick, as he snatched the rifle from his hand, and the whole party closed in a circle round him.

The detected squatter looked paralyzed—his tongue refused its office, while his form, quivering with apprehension, could scarcely keep erect, and his usually cold uneasy eyes seemed fixed balls of light, so dreadful were they in their expression of coward fear. The party proposed to settle his business at once, and this movement loosened his tongue—he broke forth in piteous accents of supplication,

“Oh, God! oh, God!” cried he, “you won’t kill me—will you?”

“Well,” said one of the party, “*we won’t do anything else*!”

Kelsy interposed, and suggested that his death be deferred until daylight, in order that the stranger might see how it was done, and be put to sleep respectably. They immediately adjourned to Dick’s cabin, where they found Sam holding the straw figure in his arms, and looking in a state of stupor at the horse; he thought his master was “done for;” but great was his joy when the well-known sounds of Kelsy’s voice assured him of his safety.

The party seated themselves in a circle in the cabin, with the culprit in the centre, and his shrinking form, trembling with fear, and pallid imploring countenance, looked most pitiful. As Kelsy gazed upon him the form of his sickly wife seemed to twine her arms around his neck, beseeching as when she before interposed herself between him and death, and the vision of his mind searched out a tender spot in Dick’s heart. He resolved to give him a chance of escape, and, therefore, proposed to the party that they should decide by a *game of cards* whether the stranger should die or be permitted to leave the country. Dick’s friends protested against such mercy; but after an earnest appeal from him, in behalf of the woman, they yielded—cards were produced, and one of the party was selected to

play against the culprit. By Kelsy's entreaty, also, he was allowed the choice of his own game, and he selected *euchre*. All seated themselves closer around the players—breathing seemed almost suspended—a beam of hope lent a slight glow to the pallid countenance of the stranger, while the compressed lips and frowning brow of his antagonist, gave assurance that no mercy would temper his play for this fearful stake. The rest of the party shared his dislike for the culprit, who was looked upon as a common foe, and their flashing eyes were bent upon his swarthy countenance with an expression of deadly hate, which forced out the cold drops of perspiration upon his sickly brow, and sunk his heart with fear. The cards were cut, and the stranger won the *deal*—he breathed with hope—he dealt and turned up the *right bower*—his antagonist *passed*, and the stranger raising the *bower*, bid him play. The hand was soon finished and the stranger counted *two*! His visage lighted up, and he wiped his brow with a feeling of confidence in his luck. The next hand the stranger ordered the card up and was *euchered*—they now stood *even*, and he again looked anxious. In the next two hands they successively won each a single count, and it was the stranger's deal again—he turned up a *king*, and held in his hand the *queen* and *ten of trumps*, together with the *eight of diamonds* and the *king* and *ten of clubs*. His antagonist ordered the *king* up, and as the stranger discarded his *diamond*, a gleam of certain success overspread his visage—the rigid face of his antagonist betrayed no sign of exultation, but his brow, on the contrary, became closer knit into a scowl, which, by his party, was looked upon as a presage of defeat. Dick's friend led the *jack of clubs*—the stranger followed suit with his *ten of clubs*—then came the *ace of trumps*—the stranger paused a moment, and played his *ten spot*—out came the *right bower*, and he yielded his *queen*—the *left* fell before his eyes, and his last *trump*, the *king*, was swept away! At each play his countenance grew more and more ashy in its expression of despair and dread; his lips had lost their colour, and his eyes had gained an intenseness of expression that seemed as if they could look into the very soul of the frowning figure before him, and read there his impending doom. For the first time a slight smile played upon the features of Dick's friend as slowly he spread before him the *ace of clubs*! The stranger crushed his *king* within his trembling hands and threw it from him, as he sank into a state of stupor, the very counterpart of death.

“Your game's up, stranger,” coolly remarked the winner;

“yes, it’s *up*—played very *neat*—but it’s *up*! And you’ve jest won a *small* patch of Kelsy’s claim—about six foot by two, or thereabouts.”

The sun had begun to tip the tops of the forest trees when this exciting contest was ended, and all the party adjourned to the outside, with the doomed stranger in their midst. They moved with silence, for a deed of blood was to be enacted. The law of the wilderness was about to offer up a victim for common safety—the midnight assassin to expiate his guilt upon the spot, and by the hand of him whom he had there endeavoured to consign to death. The music of the morning songsters met no harmonious accord in the hearts of those who now strode amid their melodies—the sweet morning air kissed brows fevered with passion, and the light breeze that played amid the forest grove and skipped innocently across the far-spread prairie, was about to bear upon its pinions the shriek of agony. Having arrived at a suitable spot, they bound the culprit to a sapling, and he hung in his bonds already, apparently, bereft of life.

“Stick him up at a hundred yards, boys,” said Dick; “ef he is a *snake*, give him a ‘small show’ for life, and ef I miss him at the first fire we’ll let him *slip*.”

The culprit aroused on hearing this, and pleaded for the smallest chance in the world.

“Don’t shoot me like a *mad dog*!” he exclaimed, in most piteous accents.

“You’re worse, you hound,” said his late antagonist; “and if Dick don’t wind up your business for you, *I* will.”

“Come, boys,” continued Dick, “you all know that this old iron’s *certain*, so give the varmint this chance—it’ll please him, and he’ll die off all the easier!”

After some persuasion, Dick’s request was acceded to, and the parties took their positions. Life hung, for the culprit, by but a thread, and that thread the will of Kelsy. Slowly the latter raised his rifle, while the party, breathless, intently fixed their eyes upon the victim. Dick’s hand began to tremble, and his aim became unsteady, for the sickly form of the stranger’s wife again seemed to rise and plead for mercy—he rested his rifle on the ground, without the heart to fire; but in an instant the vision fled, and his eye fell clear upon the countenance of the stranger; a morning ray lighting up his features, exhibited a gleam of mingled triumph, hatred, hope, and revenge—there was no mistaking its dark expression of contending passions. The pity that had almost unnerved Kelsy and saved his foe

vanished, and raising his rifle sudden as thought, the weapon rung out the stranger's knell. As the ball from its muzzle sped through his brain, a wild shriek arose upon the air, and all was again still—they loosened his bonds, and he fell forward, *dead!*

His remains were consigned to the earth without a tear, even from his companion, to whom the tragedy had been imparted. His cruelties had long since obliterated from *her* heart the last spark of early fondness; all she requested, when the grave had closed over him, was to be sent to her friends in Ohio, which was kindly done by the settlers—Dick bestowing upon her his whole stock of fine furs to defray her expenses.

Kelsy set himself down in undisturbed possession of his claim, and Sam, his faithful slave, often points to a small green mound at the edge of the grove, with the remark—

“Dat’s Massa Dick’s signature to dis land claim—*dat is!*”

II.

HOSS ALLEN'S APOLOGY; OR, THE CANDIDATE'S NIGHT IN THE MUSQUITO SWAMP.

“WELL, old fellow, you’re a *hoss!*” is a western expression, which has grown into a truism as regards Judge Allen, and a finer specimen of a western judge, to use his constituents’ language, “aint no whar,” for besides being a sound jurist, he is a great wag, and the best practical joker within the circuit of six States. Among the wolf-scalp hunters of the western border of Missouri, Judge, or, as they more familiarly style him, *Hoss* Allen is all *powerful* popular, and the “bar” hunters of the southern section equally admire his free and easy manners—they consider him one of the people—none of your stuck-up imported chaps from the dandy States, but a real genuine westerner—in short, a *hoss!* Some of the Judge’s admirers prevailed upon him recently to stand a canvass for the gubernatorial chair, in which he had Judge Edwards for an antagonist, and many are the rich jokes told of their political encounters. A marked difference characterizes the two men, and more striking opposites in disposition and demeanour would be hard to find, Edwards being slow, dignified, and

methodical, while *Hoss* tosses dignity to the winds, and comes right down to a free and easy familiarity with the "boys." *Hoss* Allen counted strong on the border counties, while his antagonist built his hopes on the centre.

Allen and Edwards had travelled together for a number of days, explaining their separate views upon State government, at each regular place of appointment, and were now nearing the southern part of the State, a section where *Hoss* had filled the judgeship with great unction. Here he resolved to spring a joke upon his antagonist, which would set the south laughing at him, and most effectually insure his defeat among the *bar* hunters. He had been maturing a plan, as they journeyed together, and now having stopped for the night, about one day's journey from the town of Benton, one of their places of appointment, and the head-quarters of the most influential men of the *bar* section, *Hoss* proceeded to put his trick in progress of execution. He held a secret conference, at the stable, with the boy who took his horse, and offered him a dollar to take a message that night to Tom Walters, at the forks leading to Benton. The boy agreed, and *Hoss* pencilled a note describing his antagonist, who was unknown in the south of the State, coupled with an earnest request, that he would "keep a look-out for Judge Eddards, and by all means be careful not to let him get into that cussed *cedar swamp*!" His express was faithful, and in due time Tom received the missive. In the mean time, the victim, Edwards, in a sweet state of confidence, was unbending his dignity at hearing *Hoss* relate to their host his amusing yarns about the early settlers. Having talked all the household into a merry mood, he proposed turning in for the night, but first offered his service to unlace the girls' corsets, and in an underbreath asked the old woman to *elope* with him in the morning—Edwards blushed at this, the girls tittered, and the host and his wife said, he was a "*raal hoss*!" Allen acknowledged he was a leetle inclined that way, and as he had had his *feed*, he now wanted his *straw*.

In the morning *Hoss* Allen became "dreadful poorly," and it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed upon to get up. All were sympathizing with his affliction, and the matron of the house boiled him some hot "*sass-tea*," which, the old man said, relieved him mightily. Judge Edwards assured *Hoss*, that it would be necessary for him to lay up for a day or two, and the afflicted candidate signified the same himself. Before they parted *Hoss* requested Edwards, as he had the whole field to himself, not to be too *hard* upon him. His antagonist

promised to spare him, but chuckled all the while at having a clear field in Allen's most popular district. Shaking the old *Hoss* by the hand, as they were about to separate, he remarked—"We will meet at Benton, I hope, in a different trim, Friend Allen." They *did* meet in different *trim*, but Edwards little dreamt the particular kind of trim *he* would appear in. As soon as Judge Edwards was fairly started, it was surprising the rapid change which took place in his antagonist—Hoss's eye lit up, a broad grin spread over his features, and pulling off the handkerchief, which was tied around his head, he twirled it above him like a flag, then stuffed it in his pocket, remarking coolly, at the same time,—“Well, that thar swamp, jest at this season, is *awful*!” His express reported himself after his night ride, assured Allen that all was O. K., and received his dollar for delivering the message; upon receiving which intelligence, Allen seated himself quietly and comfortably at his coffee, and imbibed it with a relish that drove the idea of sickness into a hopeless decline.

Judge Edwards rapidly progressed on his way, highly gratified at having his opponent off in this part of the field, and as he, in this happy mood, journeyed onwards, he set his brain to work conning a most powerful speech, one that would knock the sand from under Hoss, and leave him in a state of sprawling defeat. He resolved to sweep the south, from that point, like a prairie fire. About noon, or perhaps an hour after, he arrived at Tom Walters' for dinner, and while it was preparing, inquired how far he was from Benton.

“I've an idea,” said Tom, “you're well on to nine miles from thar—jest an easy arternoon ride.”

This was highly satisfactory to the Judge, and perceiving that the provender preparing was of a like pleasing character, he spread himself back upon a hickory-bottomed chair with a kind of easy dignity, at once comfortable to himself, and edifying to his host.

“Stranger,” inquired Tom, “did you *scare up* anythin' like the two candidates, Jedge Eddards and old Hoss Allen, on your way down *yeur*?”

“I did see something of them, my friend,” answered the Judge; and then, as if making up his mind to surprise Tom, and give him a striking example of democratic condescension, he inquired, “Would you know either of the gentlemen, if they stood before you?”

“Why, as to old Hoss,” said Tom, “I don't know anybody else, but this new Jedge I aint never seed, and ef he is the

slicked-up finefied sort on a character they pictur' him, I don't *want* to see him; it's my opinion, these squirtish kind a fellars aint perticular hard baked, and they allers goes in fur aristocracy notions."

The Judge had no idea that Tom was smoking him, and he congratulated himself that an opportunity here presented itself, where he could remove a wrong impression personally; so, loftily viewing this southern constituent, he remarked—

"You have heard a calumny, my friend, for *Judge* Edwards now sits before you, and you can see whether his appearance denotes such a person as you describe."

"No!" shouted Tom, with mock surprise, "you aint comin' a hoax over a fellar?—you raally are the sure enough Jedge?"

"I am really the Judge, my friend," responded his honour, highly elevated with Tom's astonishment.

"Then gin us your paw," shouted Tom, "you're jest the lookin' fellar kin sweep these year diggins like a catamount! What in the yearth did you do with old Hoss on the road? I heerd he was a comin' along with you. He aint gin out, has he?"

The Judge replied, with a smile which expressed disparagement of Hoss Allen's powers of endurance, that he was forced to lie up on the route, from fatigue. Dinner being announced as ready, the Judge and Tom seated themselves, and the latter highly expanded his guest's prospects in the district, assuring him that he could lick Hoss "powerful easy, ef he wasn't broken-winded." The meal being ended, the Judge demanded his horse, and inquired of his host the direct road to Benton, which Tom thus mapped out:—

"Arter you pass the big walnut, about two miles from yeur, keep *it* a mile on your left, and take the right trail fur about six hundred yards, when you'll cum to the 'saplin acre,' thar you keep to the right agin, and when that trail fatches you up, why right *over from thar* lies Benton."

This was a very clear direction to one who had never before travelled the road, but the Judge, trusting to luck, said, "he thought he would be able to get there without much difficulty," and started off, leaving his late entertainer gazing after him.

"Well, I allow you *will*, Jedge," chuckled Tom,—"*You'll* git inter that *swamp*, jest as sure as shootin', and you'll hev the biggest and hungriest audience of mosquitors ever a candidate preached law or larnin' to!" To secure his finding the swamp

road, he had stationed his boy *Jim* near the turn off, to make the matter sure.

In the course of a couple of hours along came Hoss Allen, who, as soon as Tom took hold of his bridle, winked his eye at him while he inquired—

“Did Jedge Eddards come along, Tom?”

“Well, he *did*, Hoss, oncommon extensive in his political feelins’.”

“And you didn’t let the Jedge stray away from the swamp road?” inquired Hoss.

“Well, I predicate I didn’t, fur by this time he’s travellin’ into the diggins most amazin’ innocently;” and then the pair enjoyed a regular guffaw!

“He’s safe as a skin’d *bar*, then, Tom, and I’ll spread his hide afore the Benton boys to-morrow—jest let them into the joke, and I allow, after that, his dandified aristocracy speeches won’t have much effect in this section.”

“Go it, Jedge,” shouted Tom, “ef I ain’t thar to hear it, it’ll be ‘cause the breath’ll leave me afore then—gin him goss without sweeten’—rumple his har, but don’t spile the varmint!”

After Hoss had stayed his stomach with a cold bite, he bade Tom good-day, and started for Benton, highly tickled with the success of his trick. As he neared the “saplin acre,” he met *Jim*, who exhibited a full spread of his ivories, when Hoss inquired which road he had directed the gentleman before him.

“He gone into de swamp road, massa, but what de debil he want dar, ‘cept he arter coon skins, dis niggah doesn’t hab no idear whatsomdeber.”

Allen passed on, assured that all was right, and as his horse leisurely ambled forward, he broke into singing a verse of a western ditty, which says—

“Thar ain’t throughout the western nation,
Another like old Hickory,
He was born jest fur his situation—
A bold leader of the free.”

As night spread her curtain over this wild district, Hoss neared Benton, and as his nag jogged up the principal street, he broke out into a louder strain, repeating the above verse, on hearing which, the “boys,” who were expecting him and Edwards, turned out, and old Hoss was received with a cheer.

“Hello, Jedge! How are you, Old Hoss? Give us your paw, Governor! Here at last, Squire!” and sundry such expressions of familiar welcome were showered on Allen by the crowd. “Come in, and git a drink, old fellar, shouted one of

the crowd," and forthwith all hands pushed for the hotel bar-room, where sweetened corn juice was pushed about with vast liberality—at the *candidate's* expense of course.

"Whar did you leave the new fellar, Eddards?" was the general inquiry.

"Why, boys, I stopped to rest on the road, and he slid off to git ahead of me—I heered on him at the forks, and expected he was here. It's my opinion, boys, he's seen a *bar* on the road, and bein' too delicate to make the varmint clar the path, he's taken a long circuit round him!"

This raised a laugh among the crowd, and it was followed up by the general inquiries as to what Edwards looked like, but to these Hoss shook his head, remarking, as he raised his hands expressive of how they would be astonished—"Jest wait tell you see him yourselves, boys, and then you'll be satisfied."

Let us return to Judge Edwards, who had easily found his way past the "sapling acre," and by the aid of Jim's direction progressed into the swamp road, as easy as if it were his destination. Having travelled, as he thought, about ten miles, he began to look out for Benton, and every now and then uttered an expression of surprise, that they had located the town in such a swampy country; every rod he progressed became more and more obscure, the brush more thick and wild in growth, and the ground more moist and yielding. Night, too, that season for the rendezvous of underbrush and tangle-wood horrors, was fast gathering its forces in the depths of the forest, and beneath the shadows of the thick bushes, shrouding, as with a dark mist, each object on the earth's surface, creeping up the trunks of the old trees, and noiselessly stealing away the light in which they had proudly spread their green foliage, while in lieu of their showy garb he clad them in a temporary mourning. The song of the birds became hushed, while the cry of the startled *wolf* was borne upon the breeze to the ear of the affrighted traveller, interrupted occasionally by the sharp *m-e-o-w*! of the wild-cat, making together a vocal concert most unharmonious to the ear of the bewildered candidate. To sum up these horrors a myriad of *mosquitoes*, as musical as hunger and vigorous constitutions could make them, hummed and fi-z-z-zed around him, darting in their stings and darting away from his annoyed blows, with a pertinacity and perseverance only known to the Missouri tribe of insects.

Poor Edwards!—he was fairly in for it—into a swamp at that! Night was fast making all roads alike obscure, and with

amazing rapidity covering our traveller in a mantle of uncertainty. The possibility of his escape that night first became improbable, and then impossible. He hallooed at the highest pitch of his voice, but the wolf was the only live varmint that answered his cry, and a strange fear began to creep over his heart. He remembered well reading accounts of where hungry droves of these animals had eaten the horse from under the saddle, the rider upon it, bones, hide, *har* and all, leaving scarce a vestige of the victims to mark the deed, and his hair grew uneasy on his cranium at the bare thought of such an unpolitical termination to his canvass. At this particular moment a *yell*, as of a thousand devils in his immediate neighbourhood, set his heart knocking against his ribs in a fearful manner. When he partially recovered from the shock, he tied his horse to one tree and quickly mounted another—whispering the hope to his heart, at the same time, that a meal on his horse would satisfy the gathering crowd of varmints, who were shouting their death song below him. Having seated himself astride a limb, the mosquitoes had a fair chance at him, and they put the Judge through as active an exercise as ever was inflicted on a recruit; there was this difference, however, between him and a recruit, that *they* are generally *raw* at the commencement of a drill, but poor Edwards was most *raw* at the end of his lesson. Every new yell of the swamp pre-emptioners, made him climb a limb higher, and each progression upwards appeared to introduce him to a fresh and hungrier company of mosquitoes; the trees in the swamp were like the dwellings in Paris, their *highest* tenants were the most needy. Day at length broke, and our harassed candidate, almost exhausted, clambered from his exalted position. His frightened but unscathed steed uttered a neigh of welcome as he bestrode him, and giving loose to the rein he committed his escape to the animal's sagacity, while he aided his efforts by a devout supplication. Accident favoured the horse's footsteps, for striking the trail leading to the road he started off into a trot, and soon broke his rider's spell of terror, by turning into the main avenue leading to Benton. Edwards slowly passed his pimpled hand over his worse pimpled face, sadly remarking—

"Last night's '*bills*' all passed, for I bear their stinging *signatures* all over my countenance."

When ten o'clock came, on the day following Judge Allen's arrival at Benton, the town swarmed with the southern constituency of Missouri, and as soon as the tavern bell, which had been put in requisition to announce the candidate's readi-

ness, had ceased its clamour, Hoss mounted the balcony of the hotel, and rolling up his sleeves "spread himself" for an unusually brilliant effort.

"Boys!" shouted he, "I want your attention to matters of vital import—of uncommon moment, and replete with a nation's welfar." [Here looking down into the crowd at Sam Wilson, who was talking as loud as he could bellow, about an imported heifer he had just bought, Hoss called his attention:] "Sam," said he, "you'd better bring that heifer of your'n up here to address the meetin', and I'll wait till the animal gits through!" This raised a laugh on Sam, and Hoss proceeded. After dilating at some length on the *imported* candidate who was his antagonist, he "*let himself out*," on some of the measures he advocated, and particularly dwelt on the fact that he went in for creating a license law for hunting varmints!

"Would you have the least mite of an idea, boys," said Hoss, "that this creatur' of a faction wants to have every man's rifle stamped with the State arms, and then made pay a license to the State before he can git a bonus for wolf scalps?" [At this moment a shrill voice interrupted him again; a girl belonging to the hotel was shouting to a couple of youngsters, who had been despatched to the barn for eggs, to "quit *suckin'* them thar eggs, or the candidates would stand a mighty small chance for thur dinner.] "Jest tell that gall," said Hoss, "to suck my share and stop her screamin'." He again continued—"I want to know what in yearth this Massissippi country's comin' to, when sich fellars finds favour with the people—what do you think of him, boys?"

"Why, *cuss his pictur*!" was the general response from the *bar* hunters.

While Hoss was thus arousing public indignation against his antagonist, a stranger entered the crowd, and after listening a moment to the speaker's imaginary flights, he interrupted him by shouting—

"I deny your assertions, Judge Allen!"

This was a bomb shell, and the crowd cleared a space round the stranger, in expectation of a fight; but Allen, after surveying the stranger, in whom he recognized his antagonist Edwards, coolly inquired why *he* disputed it?

"What, *me*!" shouted Edwards, "who can better declare your assertions false than the man you are misrepresenting? you know very well that *I* am that Judge Edwards!"

Hoss Allen turned calmly round to the crowd and said, "Boys, you know I never get angry at a man insane or in

liquor, and as I don't know this fellar, and never seed him afore in my life, it's the best proof that he aint Jedge Eddards; so you'll oblige me by taking him off the ground, and keeping from disturbing the meeting."

Expostulation was useless; without any ceremony he was carried into the hotel, boiling with indignation. There, however, he had to stay, at a convenient distance, to hear that Allen was giving him "*particular jesse*."

After the meeting adjourned three cheers were given for Hoss Allen, and all parties gathered into the bar to take a little *fluid*, and discuss the speech. Edwards having now been relieved from durance, started for Hoss; burning inside with choler, and smarting exteriorly from mosquito-bites, he looked *bitter*.

"Do you say you don't know me, Judge Allen?" inquired he.

Hoss looked steadily at him, then, coolly taking out his spectacles, he wiped the glasses, adjusted them upon his nose, and surveyed the questioner from head to foot; he then remarked:

"Thar is somethin' about your voice, and the clothes you ware, that I ought to know; Jedge Eddards wore a coat and kerseys exactly like yourn, but I'll swar he had a better-lookin' face than you carry when we parted yesterday mornin'. If you are him, you're been the wust-used candidate I've seed in an age."

"Yes," responded Edwards, "thanks to that d—n nigger that sent me into the swamp. I tell you, sir, that I have passed a night to which the infernal regions are a scant pattern, and between mosquitoes, wolves, and wild cats, I should not be surprised if my hair had turned gray."

"I begin to *re-cognize* you now, Jedge," said Hoss, in a sympathetic tone, "and no wonder I didn't know you at first sight—your head is swelled as big as a *pumkin*! I'll do the clean thing, Jedge," said Hoss, starting for the balcony; "I'll apologize afor the boys, publicly, for not knowin' you."

"No, no!" shouted Edwards, who knew his apology would only place his night's adventure in a more ridiculous light. "I don't demand any apology." But he was too late, Hoss had already called the attention of the crowd.

"Boys," said he, "as an honourable man who finds himself in the wrong, I am bound to apologize, publicly, to my friend Jedge Eddards. The Jedge is a leetle changed in appearance since we wur last together, and I did not *re-cog-*

nize him ; I tharfore ask his pardon fur orderin' him off the ground."

"I grant it!" shouted Edwards, glad here to wind up the apology ; then, turning round, he added, "Come, boys, let us drink good friends."

"Wait a minit, boys," said Hoss ; "the Jedge and I havin' smoothed that little marter over, I jest want to tell you why I didn't know him at fust sight. You all know that the mosquitoes in cedar swamp are an *oreful* hungry breed, and when they git a passenger they present him with numerous 'relief bills.' Well, I had gained considerable popularity in that swamp, by presentin' their condition before the legislatur', and askin' for relief for the distressed inhabitants ; the Jedge, to head me down thar, passed all last night on a limb of one of the trees makin' stump speeches to the varmints ; and you can see by his countenance that, expectin' to be elected, he had accepted all their *mosquito bills*!"

One tremendous shout rent the air, followed by bursts of laughter, from which Edwards retreated into the hotel. We have but to add that Hoss carried the *Bar* counties "as easy as rolling off a log!" His antagonist in vain tried to stem the tide of fun ; when he essayed to speak a *m-e-o-w* of a wild cat, or the *hum* of a mosquito, imitated by some of his audience, would be sure to set the rest *sniggering*, and spoil his effort.

III. .

DEAF SMITH, THE TEXAN SPY.

ABOUT two years after the Mexican revolution, a difficulty occurred between the new government and a portion of the people, which threatened the most serious consequences—even the bloodshed and horrors of civil war. Briefly, the cause was this : The Constitution had fixed the city of Austin as the permanent capital, where the public archives were kept, with the reservation, however, of a power in the president to order their temporary removal in case of danger from the inroads of a foreign enemy, or the force of a sudden insurrection.

Conceiving that the exceptional emergency had arrived, as

the Camanches frequently committed ravages within sight of the capital itself, Houston, who then resided at Washington, on the Brazos, dispatched an order commanding his subordinate functionaries to send the State records to the latter place, which he declared to be *pro tempore* the seat of government.

It is impossible to describe the stormy excitement which followed the promulgation of this *fiat* in Austin. The keepers of hotels, boarding-houses, groceries, and faro-banks, were thunderstruck, maddened to frenzy; for the measure would be a deathblow to their prosperity in business; and, accordingly, they determined at once to take the necessary steps to avert the danger, by opposing the execution of Houston's mandate. They called a mass-meeting of the citizens and farmers of the circumjacent country, who were all more or less interested in the question; and, after many fiery speeches against the asserted tyranny of the administration, it was unanimously resolved to prevent the removal of the archives by open and armed resistance. To that end they organized four hundred men, one moiety of whom, relieving the other at regular periods of duty, should keep constant guard around the state-house until the peril passed by. The commander of this force was one Colonel Morton, who had achieved considerable renown in the war for independence, and had still more recently displayed desperate bravery, in two desperate duels, in both which he had cut his antagonists nearly to pieces with the Bowie-knife. Indeed, from the notoriety of his character, for revenge, as well as courage, it was thought that President Houston would renounce his purpose touching the archives, so soon as he should learn who was the leader of the opposition.

Morton, on his part, whose vanity fully equalled his personal prowess, encouraged and justified the prevailing opinion by his boastful threats. He swore that if the president did succeed in removing the records by the march of an overpowering force, he would then himself hunt him down like a wolf, and shoot him with little ceremony, or stab him in his bed, or waylay him in his walks of recreation. He even wrote to the hero of San Jacinto to that effect. The latter replied in a note of laconic bravery:

"If the people of Austin do not send the archives, I shall certainly come and take them; and if Colonel Morton can kill me, he is welcome to my ear-cap!"

On the reception of this answer the guard was doubled around the state-house. Chosen sentinels were stationed along the road leading to the capitol, the military paraded the streets

from morning till night, and a select caucus held permanent session in the city-hall. In short, everything betokened a coming tempest.

One day, while matters were in this precarious condition, the caucus at the city-hall was surprised by the sudden appearance of a stranger, whose mode of entering was as extraordinary as his looks and dress. He did not knock at the closed door—he did not seek admission there at all; but climbing unseen a small bushy-topped oak, which grew beside the wall, he leaped without sound or warning through a lofty window. He was clothed altogether in buckskin, carried a long and heavy rifle in his hand, wore at the bottom of his left suspender a large Bowie-knife, and had in his leathern belt a couple of pistols half the length of his gun. He was tall, straight as an arrow, active as a panther in his motions, with dark complexion, and luxuriant jetty hair, with a severe, iron-like countenance, that seemed never to have known a smile, and the eyes of intense vivid black, wild and rolling, and piercing as the point of a dagger. His strange advent inspired a thrill of involuntary fear, and many present unconsciously grasped the handles of their side-arms.

“Who are you, that thus presumes to intrude amongst gentlemen without invitation?” demanded Colonel Morton ferociously, essaying to cow down the stranger with his eye.

The latter returned his stare with compound interest, and laid his long, bony finger on his lip, as a sign—but of what the spectators could not imagine.

“Who are you? Speak! or I will cut an answer out of your heart!” shouted Morton, almost distracted with rage by the cool, sneering gaze of the other, who now removed his finger from his lip, and laid it on the hilt of his monstrous knife.

The fiery colonel then drew his dagger, and was in the act of advancing upon the stranger, when several caught and held him back, remonstrating.

“Let him alone, Morton, for God’s sake. Do you not perceive he is crazy?”

At the moment Judge Webb, a man of shrewd intellect and courteous manners, stepped forward, and addressed the intruder in a most respectful manner:

“My good friend, I presume you have made a mistake in the house. This is a private meeting, where none but members are admitted.”

The stranger did not appear to comprehend the words, but

could not fail to understand the mild and deprecatory manner. His rigid features relaxed, and moving to a table in the centre of the hall, where there were materials and implements for writing, he seized a pen and traced one line: "I am deaf!" He then held it up before the spectators, as a sort of natural apology for his own want of politeness.

Judge Webb took this paper, and wrote a question: "Dear sir—will you be so obliging as to inform us what is your business with the present meeting?"

The other responded by delivering a letter inscribed on the back, "To the citizens of Austin." They broke the seal and read it aloud. It was from Houston, and showed the usual terse brevity of his style:

"Fellow Citizens:—Though in error, and deceived by the arts of traitors, I will give you three more days to decide whether you will surrender the public archives. At the end of that time you will please let me know your decision.

"SAM. HOUSTON."

After the reading, the deaf man waited a few seconds, as if for a reply, and then turned and was about to leave the hall, when Colonel Morton interposed, and sternly beckoned him back to the table. The stranger obeyed, and Morton wrote: "You were brave enough to insult me by your threatening looks ten minutes ago; are you brave enough now to give me satisfaction?"

The stranger penned in reply, "I am at your service!"

Morton wrote again, "Who will be your second?"

The stranger rejoined: "I am too generous to seek an advantage, and too brave to fear any on the part of others; therefore I never need the aid of a second."

Morton penned, "Name your terms."

The stranger traced, without a moment's hesitation: "Time, sunset this evening; place, the left bank of the Colorado, opposite Austin; weapons, rifles; and distance, a hundred yards. Do not fail to be in time!"

He then took three steps across the room, and disappeared through the window, as he had entered.

"What!" exclaimed Judge Webb, "is it possible, Colonel Morton, that you intend to fight that man? He is a mute, if not a positive maniac. Such a meeting, I fear, will sadly tarnish your laurels."

"You are mistaken," replied Morton, with a smile; "that mute is a hero, whose fame stands in the record of a dozen

battles, and at least half as many bloody duels. Besides, he is the favourite emissary and bosom friend of Houston. If I have the good fortune to kill him, I think it will tempt the president to retract his vow against venturing any more on the field of honour."

"You know the man, then. Who is he? Who is he?" asked twenty voices together.

"Deaf Smith," answered Morton, coolly.

"Why, no; that cannot be. Deaf Smith was slain at San Jacinto," remarked Judge Webb.

"There, again, your honour is mistaken," said Morton. "The story of Deaf Smith's death was a mere fiction, got up by Houston to save the life of his favourite from the sworn vengeance of certain Texans, on whose conduct he had acted as a spy. I fathomed the artifice twelve months since."

"If what you say be true, you are a madman yourself!" exclaimed Webb. "Deaf Smith was never known to miss his mark. He has often brought down ravens in their most rapid flight, and killed Camanches and Mexicans at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards!"

"Say no more," answered Colonel Morton, in tone of deep determination; "the thing is already settled. I have agreed to meet him. There can be no disgrace in falling before such a shot, and, if I succeed, my triumph will confer the greater glory!"

Such was the general habit of thought and feeling prevalent throughout Texas at that period.

Towards evening a vast crowd assembled at the place appointed to witness the hostile meeting; and so great was the popular recklessness as to affairs of the sort, that numerous and considerable sums were wagered on the result. At length the red orb of the summer touched the curved rim of the western horizon, covering it all with crimson and gold, and filling the air with a flood of burning glory; and then the two mortal antagonists, armed with long ponderous rifles, took their station back to back, and at a preconcerted signal—the waving of a white handkerchief—walked slowly and steadily off in opposite directions, counting their steps until each had measured fifty. They both completed the given number about the same instant, and then they wheeled, each to aim and fire when he chose. As the distance was great, both paused for some seconds—long enough for the beholders to flash their eyes from one to the other, and mark the striking contrast betwixt them. The face of Colonel Morton was calm and smiling, but the smile it bore

had a most murderous meaning. On the contrary, the countenance of Deaf Smith was stern and passionless as ever. A side view of his features might have been mistaken for a profile done in cast-iron. The one, too, was dressed in the richest cloth, the other in smoke-tinted leather. But that made no difference in Texas then, for the heirs of heroic courage were considered peers, the class of inferiors embraced none but cowards.

Presently two rifles exploded with simultaneous roars. Colonel Morton gave a prodigious bound upwards, and dropped to the earth a corpse. Deaf Smith stood erect, and immediately began to reload his rifle; and then, having finished his brief task, he hastened away into the adjacent forest.

Three days afterwards, General Houston, accompanied by Deaf Smith and ten more men, appeared in Austin, and without further opposition removed the state papers.

The history of the hero of the foregoing anecdote, was one of the most extraordinary ever known in the West. He made his advent in Texas at an early period, and continued to reside there until his death, which happened some two years ago; but although he had many warm personal friends, no one could ever learn either the land of his birth, or a single gleam of his previous biography. When questioned on the subject, he laid his finger on his lip; and if pressed more urgently, his brow writhed, and his dark eye seemed to shoot sparks of livid fire! He could write with astonishing correctness and facility, considering his situation; and although denied the exquisite pleasure and priceless advantages of the sense of hearing, nature had given him ample compensation, by an eye quick and far-seeing as an eagle's, and a smell keen and incredible as that of a raven. He could discover objects moving miles away in the far-off prairie, when others could perceive nothing but earth and sky; and the rangers used to declare that he could catch the scent of a Mexican or Indian at as great a distance as a buzzard could distinguish the odour of a dead carcass.

These were the qualities which fitted him so well for a spy, in which capacity he rendered invaluable services to Houston's army during the war of independence. He always went alone, and generally obtained the information desired. His habits in private life were equally singular. He could never be persuaded to sleep under the roof of a house, or even to use a tent cloth. Wrapped in his blanket, he loved to lie out in the open air, under the blue canopy of pure ether, and count the stars, or gaze with a yearning look at the melancholy moon.

When not employed as a spy or guide, he subsisted by hunting, being often absent on solitary excursions for weeks and even months together in the wilderness. He was a genuine son of nature, a grown-up child of the woods and prairie, which he worshipped with a sort of pagan adoration. Excluded by his infirmities from a cordial fellowship with his kind, he made the inanimate things of the earth his friends, and entered by the heart's own adoption into brotherhood with the luminaries of heaven! Wherever there was land or water, barren mountains or tangled brakes of wild waving cane, there was Deaf Smith's home, and there he was happy; but in the streets of great cities, in all the great thoroughfares of men, wherever there was flattery or fawning, base cunning or craven fear, there Deaf Smith was an alien and an exile.

Strange soul! he hath departed on the long journey, away among those high bright stars which were his night lamps; and he hath either solved or ceased to ponder the deep mystery of the magic word "life." He is dead—therefore let his errors rest in oblivion, and his virtues be remembered with hope.

IV.

A YANKEE IN A PLANTER'S HOUSE.

I PAUSED a moment at the gate for a view at the old family mansion. The northern front is not nearly so attractive as the southern. The trees which had been recently planted at my last visit, were now finely grown; and it was evident that another month would make the spacious lawn one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The house was large, painted white, and furnished with dark-green shutters. Huge chimneys were built at both ends outside the house; and, on the northern side, a broad piazza, supported by half a score of columns, extended along the whole length. An hospitable deal bench ran along the weather-boarding; and at one end of the piazza was a sort of shelf attached to the balustrade, on which a neat unpainted bucket, with shining hoops and bail of brass, was always standing. In a hole of this same shelf, fitted for the purpose, was the ewer; and near this, on a roller, was a towel white as the snow. Through the centre of the building

ran a hall, some ten or twelve feet in width. I may be permitted to say here, for the benefit of my northern reader, who may not have seen the south, that, for three-fourths of the year, the hall and the porch of a southern mansion are in constant requisition. You sit, lounge, or take your siesta, in either. Both, but more commonly the piazza, serve you for your promenade. In the hall you very frequently see the appliances for sporting—guns, belts, pouches, horns—while on the walls you will perhaps see engravings of celebrated horses. In the piazza, the dogs consider themselves privileged; and even the hounds sometimes intrude. The youngsters romp there, and there the hobby-horse performs his untiring gallop.

"I swear," said Sancho Panza, and he might have said the same *without* swearing, "I think the world is everywhere the same." But the sanguine squire, it will be remembered, was untravelled. There is no record that he ever left the chimney-corner before his marriage; and Donna Teresa Panza first awoke and missed his conjugal presence on the first night of his world-renowned pilgrimage. With many grains of allowance, therefore, O shade of the squire of squires! do I repeat thy immortal words; much, I confess, in thine own spirit, but nevertheless "so as with a difference." Else why have the terms "haughty Southron" and "weasel Scot" been bandied across the Tweed? Why else have "La Belle France" and "Le Diable Angleterre" played fisticuffs across the Strait of Dover? Why else the epithet "proud" for the Spaniard, and "passionate" for the Italian? Why else swells the world of words, as the sands of the sea for multitude, with these latter-day additions of Blue-Nose, Yankee, Sucker, Hoosier, Buckeye, Wolverine—what not?

"Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry;"

said the new-made king Henry V.

"No, Sancho," thought I, as I came down the next morning, "the world is *not* everywhere the same; and you yourself would not have said so on a second knight-errant pilgrimage." And, as if to confirm my remark, the voice of Professor Maters, in no very gentle tones, saluted my ear.

"Git a-o-u-t! Don't ye s'pose I kin put on my own clothes? Same thing, a'most, yew tried to dew last night. Jest as if a man couldn't pull off his own trowsis! Who told ye to come here?"

"Maussa John."

"Who's maussy John?"

"De colonel, maussa."

"What in the name o' human natur du ye call me maussy for? I aint nobody's master."

"Yes, maussa."

"There it is ag'in. Yew kin leave these diggins."

"Yes, maussa."

"Wal, why don't ye go? Clear out. I guess I kin dress myself. What's yer name?"

"Name Grief, maussa."

"Name *what*?"

"Name Grief."

"Git aout! yew're jokin'! What's yer name, anyhow?"

"Name GRIEF, maussa."

"Wal, yew kin take my hat."*

Here there was a short pause.

"No, no, yew consumed fool! I don't want it *brushed*. Yew're gittin' all the nap off on't. Yew kin *go*. I'm *threw* with ye this time. I al'ays wait on myself to hum; and I don't want nobody to wait on me *away* from hum. I'm a free and independent citizen of Steventown, State of Maine."

"I al'ays waits on de gemmen, maussa."

"Childern of Isril! can't you take a hint, yew darned nigger! Make yourself scarce now, or I'll make you think the end o' the world's comin'. Ef I don't I hope I may die!"

Here Grief evidently became alarmed; for I heard his step at the head of the stairs. As he passed me, a moment afterwards, his mouth displayed its whole inventory of interior decoration, as he said—

"Ki! ben gwine 'stracted, sure's you bawn!"

V.

TOM WADE AND THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

It was upon a cold November night that about a dozen of us were seated or lying in a half-faced camp, with a blazing fire in front, that dispensed a very cheerful warmth in our

* Synonymous with another Yankee phrase—"Well! that beats me."

midst, but which occasionally sent a very cheerless gust of smoke with it. The day's hunt was over. We had recounted our exploits until each one was as familiar with all the details as if he had been personally present, and the plan of operations for the morrow had been canvassed and decided on, until each man knew his direction and his post. The office of cook for the ensuing day had fallen on me, and I was busy mixing the flour, slicing the middling, cutting up the fat ribs of venison, and running them through with hazel switches, so as to secure both the early departure of our hunters, and myself an uninterrupted nap in the morning.

Our horses were tied hard by, except one or two old fellows, whose established habits gave assurance that we would find them close at hand in the morning, or whose sagacity taught them that the safest and most comfortable place for them was in the neighbourhood of their masters, to whom they were very willing to render service for protection, *Mais revenons, &c.*

All was comfortable for the night. Our saddles furnished a glorious pillow, and our buffalo skins a glorious bed. With one's feet to the fire, and on such a couch, I defy any one, after a hard day's hunt, to rise in the morning without a sense of energy that would face a lion, and without an appetite that would devour him when faced, and handled *à la* Samson. You may talk about your reunions, your soirées, and your dejeuners, and all that sort of conventionalism that the world calls social refinement; but let me tell you, that, for true-hearted benevolence, for that freedom of expression that conveys and leaves no sting, for an unreserved intercourse as void of selfishness as it is of parade, commend me to a hunting-party in a half-faced camp. Politics are never introduced, religious differences find no entrance there, trade is excluded, and in this rare community, where every man is the equal of his neighbour, the jest goes round as harmless as it is general, and when the conversation takes a graver cast, many a story is told of deeds of daring, and of hair-breadth escapes, that startle the listener into deep attention, for the story is generally a story of truth.

It is one of these that I now propose to tell you.

After all my arrangements for the night had been completed, I turned around to lie down, when my eye rested on the stout form of Tom Wade, who was busily patching up, with a needle a shade smaller than a sail-maker's, the rents his garments had suffered in the day's hunt. His broad shoulders,

deep chest, and sinewy arm, gave unerring indication of great strength. Like all very powerful men, Wade was proverbially good-natured. I never knew of his having a fight; I have heard of his having had two, but you can never get him to talk about them. Rumour speaks of a threatened grand jury that followed his last combat, and of Tom's mysterious disappearance until the storm blew over. Yet rumour never dared to hint that anything in that fight was foul. It was the fearful result of a tremendous blow in a *fair fight*, that frightened Tom into temporary retirement. The consciousness of his immense strength and the recollection of that scrape have kept him from that time the most peaceful man in the community.

His courage no one doubted. He was generally selected as the most fitting agent to execute civil or criminal processes that were attended with danger. On such occasions, when he always obeyed with reluctance, and when no one else could be found to do the duty, he was always successful. It must have been the general opinion of his great strength and courage that induced submission to the law whenever Tom Wade had the process to serve. He told me that he had never met with resistance but once, and that was from a gambler named Hinkson, and that after that "fuss" Hinkson was the best friend he ever had.

On some rainy day, when I have nothing else to do, I may tell you of that scrape between Bill Hinkson and Tom Wade. I felt no disposition to sleep, so turning to Wade, I said to him—

"Tom, as soon as you have done sewing up those great gaps, I wish you would tell me of some of your old hunts. To judge from your success to-day, you must have killed a good deal of game in your time. I am very anxious to hear you talk of hunting, for you know it was only yesterday I had the buck-ague, and last night they had to sit up with me, so that I am very keen to hear something of your earlier deeds with the gun."

"I have not much to tell you, Phil, except that I have shot a good deal when this country was fresher than it is now, and have killed various varments in that time."

"Ah, that reminds me," I replied, "that I heard Billings speak the other day of your having had a hand-to-hand encounter with a grizzly bear on the prairies once. Was that so?"

"Yes," he answered, "I did have a fight with a grizzly bear once."

"Well," I anxiously said, "do tell me all about it. I see

you are not sleepy, and I don't feel like going to bed, so let's have it."

"You may well say," he gravely replied, "that I am not sleepy. I never think of those times and go to sleep very shortly afterwards. I try to forget them, but whenever I have little to do, some of the scenes of that hunt are sure to come into my mind, and recollection almost gives me the horrors. I don't like to think about it. Excuse me—we'll talk of something else."

"Just as you like, Tom, but I would take it as a great favour if you would tell me of that fight."

"Well," he rejoined, "it will perhaps do no harm. When I get to thinking about those days, I can think of little else for some time, and talking about the matter is no worse than thinking about it; so, if you will listen, I'll tell you about that hunt on the plains.

"It is now about fifteen years since a party of us, ten in number, started from the Boon's-lick, to take a buffalo-hunt on the Santa Fè route. We took along with us some pack mules, and two or three good horses, to ride the buffalo down. We did not think it necessary to carry *many* provisions with us, as the game would supply our wants in this respect, and it would fatigue our mules unnecessarily. When we got to the line, we heard from some of the traders that the buffalo were very scarce that year on the trace, and we concluded to turn to the right, and take up the Missouri a little higher. We crossed finally about Council Bluffs, and travelled along the edge of the Platte.

"From some cause, we found the game very scarce, and the further we advanced, the scarcer it got. Since we had left the settlements we had only killed enough to supply our own immediate wants, and had not jerked a single pound. As the season was pleasant we concluded to go ahead until we reached the buffalo country, wherever that might be, and every night saw us more remote from the settlements, and apparently as remote from the game. It was, however, very rarely that we all came to camp at night without bringing in something. But I shall never forget the first night when we all assembled around our fire without provisions, and listened to the tale each man told, of his not only having killed no game, but of his not even seeing any. We began to think we had got into a bad box, and that we had better think of returning.

"When this proposal was made, it was ridiculed, and it was answered, that, as we had come this far, it would never do

to think of backing out now. What would the folks say at home, when we told them that we got scared at the first night we slept without a supper? and, in addition to this, it was probable we should find game to-morrow; that the buffalo must be somewhere on the plains, and that we should enjoy the past with appetites sharpened by a little fast.

"These arguments prevailed, and on the next morning we took up our line of march westward.

"I carried with me to the plains a noble hound, named Brutus. He was, Phil, the most sagacious and most devoted dog I ever knew. He was attached to me by every tie that ever links the human to the brute—courage, exclusive devotion, sagacity, sleepless vigilance, were his. I loved that hound better than I ever loved a dog before or since. He was my constant companion; at daybreak he was ready, during the hunt he was at my side, or in pursuit of game that I had wounded, and at night he slept at my head, to guard me from danger. He was a noble dog.

"The hunt of the next day with my companions was as unsuccessful as that of the previous one; they had seen no game. As for me, I had shot a prairie dog, and thinking that that was better than nothing at all, I had brought it into camp. I shall not soon forget the look of intense interest with which my prize was regarded. It is, you know, an animal no larger than a fox-squirrel. In a moment it was seized, skinned, embowelled, and divided with fairness into ten parts. The hide and bowels were Brutus's share. I never saw famished wolves devour flesh with such fierce greediness as did my companions the pittance allotted to them. My own share I added to the hide and bowels, and gave to the hound. That dog, Phil, must have known the condition of the camp, for, though he was as hungry as I was, yet I saw him cast one look at the knot of men, and then one look at me; a moment afterwards he turned away from his food, and lay down at his usual place in camp. I turned to pat my dog for his noble conduct, and, when I looked back, the hound's share had disappeared.

"A return was now spoken of more openly, but an accident the previous day had rendered that quite a difficult operation. In our eagerness to hunt, we had omitted the usual precaution to secure our animals, and they had strayed off. The party despatched to find them reported that they had seen nothing of them, and it was concluded that we had better remain together, and advance, than run the risk of separation and starving if we attempted to regain them. It was better to

hunt than to look after the horses. If, perchance, any of us should see them during the day, he could drive them up, or come to the camp for assistance. Fortunately for us at the time, one horse had remained. He was too old or too poor to run away.

"That night, after the prairie dog had been disposed of, a snort was heard in the rear of the camp; the horse was seen to raise itself suddenly on its hinder legs, and the next instant he was lying on his side, with the life-blood spirting from a hole in his forehead. In less than an hour, my famished companions had gorged themselves into a deep slumber. Brutus and I came in for our share. It was a glorious repast. It seemed to me then the most luscious food I had ever tasted. The first morsel I swallowed half-raw, and entirely unchewed. I could not resist the overpowering sense of drowsiness that stole upon me, and leaving to Brutus the task of keeping watch, I resigned myself to that deep sleep that always follows excess.

"There was not much need for the hound's wakefulness. *He* might have slumbered on too, for aught that we knew, or cared. If Indians were near us, they were welcome, for we could have taken from them the means of their subsistence; but nothing disturbed us that night.

"The horse lasted us nearly a week, and at last gave out. We were still advancing, and still there was no game. On the day when the horse-flesh was entirely consumed, the party returned with the usual tidings that no game was seen, not even a prairie-dog, or a snake. I saw Joe Winn, a large, fat man, cast a longing look at Brutus, and instinctively the dog crept to my side and lay down.

"On the next night, it was proposed by Winn that Brutus should be killed. I seized my gun, and swore that the first man that laid his hand on the hound should die. Not a man in the camp stirred, for they knew how I loved that dog. All this time, Phil—would you believe it?—the dog kept his eye steadily fixed on mine, as if to read his fate in the expression of my glance. When he saw me seize my gun, he seemed to know my determination, and wagged his tail and went to nestle in his usual place of repose.

"I do not know how it was, but that night the prayers, and entreaties, and arguments of my companions made me regard with less aversion the loss of my favourite hound, and finally to give a silent assent to his death. When I saw Joe Winn rise to get his hatchet I rose to leave the camp, so as

not to see the last of my faithful friend. I turned, however, to take one last look, and there were his eyes fixed softly and imploringly on mine, as if he had heard all that was said, and wanted me to protect him. He did not stir from his place, but kept his eye firmly on me. The least motion of mine would have sent him headlong on Winn's throat; but he did not move. I turned away, and as I did so I heard the hatchet descend with a dull crushing sound upon his skull. The moment after I felt something touch my leg, and as I looked down I saw my hound licking my foot. The blood was pouring from a dreadful gap in his forehead, yet the noble dog had bounded, after the blow, to the feet of his master, and expended his last consciousness in this demonstration of his devotion. I could not stand it. I wept like a child."

Here Wade put his hand to his face. Touched with sympathy at the sight of this strong man in tears, I turned aside to let his emotion have its way. At length he resumed.

"Joe Winn, it was well for you at that moment that my gun was not within my reach. I forgive you; yet I shall never forget that act of yours, that deprived me of one of the noblest and the truest of the brute creation. And poor Brutus! that last look of yours has haunted me many a time since. Often when I gaze steadily at any object, it assumes the soft and imploring look that was the last you ever fixed upon your master! I have not told you, Phil, of the remaining horrors of that expedition, but to me that moment was the most dreadful.

"My share of the dog was allotted to me, but I could not touch it. I stole secretly out of camp, and buried it in the sand. My tears flowed freely over the shallow grave, and I left it with a feeling of deep and utter desolation. I suppose I was watched in my retreat, for on the next morning, when I cast one last look at the resting-place, I saw that the remnant of poor Brutus had been disinterred, and gone to feast some of my famished comrades!

"In the course of that day, all trace of the dog had disappeared. At night, after the usual report of the day's hunt had been made, it became with us a very grave question, what was next to be done. The prospect of game was utterly hopeless. The chance of returning, and the expectation from a further advance, equally desperate. Everything had been consumed that could contribute to the support of human life, when some one—I forget now who it was—proposed that, as we were all likely to perish, it would be better to sacrifice one

of us, for the sake of the rest, and commence our return immediately. This proposal was received without a solitary murmur of dissent, and it was agreed to try one more day's hunt, and, if that was unsuccessful, then to select some one of our party, who should either kill himself, or be killed by some one to be designated by some lot.

"The next day was spent as usual, and we all returned to camp, filled with dismay and the most direful forebodings. With one consent, and without one word being said, we formed ourselves into a circle. The silence was at length broken by some one proposing that the lot should be decided in the following manner:—Ten sticks, of unequal length, were to be cut, and to be placed in the ground on the end by some one blindfolded. Each man, blindfolded, was to draw. He who drew the shortest stick was to be the victim. He who drew the longest was to be the executioner.

"The twigs were cut from the wild sage, put in the ground, and each man advanced to draw. Not a word was said. Nothing was heard save the irregular step and hurried breathing of each man as he was led, blindfolded, to the spot. The decision was at length made. It was found that I had drawn the longest twig, and the shortest had fallen to the lot of Joe Winn, the murderer of Brutus!

"I have been, Phil, to several executions—I have seen many men die; but I never, so help me God, saw such a look of mingled dismay, despair, and mortal anguish, as that man exhibited when it was decided that he was to be the victim! It was the most painful view in which I ever saw human nature. We all involuntarily turned away, and all that remained for the unfortunate man was to designate the way in which he would die.

"He arose from his place on the ground, and commenced speaking—

"'Boys, the shortest stick has fallen to me, and——'

"Here his voice choked with emotion. Seeing that our faces were averted, a sudden ray of hope must have gleamed on the unfortunate man. At the next moment I felt that he had seized me by the arm, and as he did so we all heard him utter, in the most piteous and heart-rending accents—

"Oh! Wade, save me!—save me, Tom! I know that you can do it if you try. If you just say so, the boys won't see me killed. I know they won't! Just say so, dear Tom, and I will do anything in the world for you! Oh! Tom, don't shoot me!—don't shoot me now! We can go one more day without

food. One more day won't hurt us much. I think we'll kill something to-morrow. *You* will kill something, I know! Oh! don't let me die now! I don't want to die now! Oh! save me, Tom! I will die to-morrow without saying a single word. I killed your dog, Tom, I know; but them other boys put me up to it. You can jest ask them about it, if you don't believe me. If he was alive again, I wouldn't let one of them touch a hair of his hide! Oh! Tom, save me! You can save me, if you *jest* say the word! Won't you say it, dear Tom?'

"And the fellow absolutely devoured my hand with kisses. I felt a deep loathing for such an abject coward. The allusion to Brutus had made me mad; but a better feeling, and a strong repugnance to shed human blood, in perfect composure, prevailed; and, turning to my comrades, I asked them to let Winn off until to-morrow night, and that we'd try one more day's hunt. This was at once agreed to, on condition that if it became necessary Winn should be the first victim.

"We slept that night as well as we could. The dawn found us all prepared for our usual hunt, and we started in different directions, with an agreement to meet at sunset at the present camp.

"I had spent about the day in the fruitless search for game, when my eye rested, and became in a moment intensely fixed, on the most delightful spectacle ever presented to its view. It was the fresh track in the sand of some very large animal! My heart leaped into my throat as I tightened my belt and started in pursuit. As I advanced, the sign grew fresher, until I was conscious that I was approaching the presence of the animal.

"A few steps more solved all my doubts. In a little thicket of sage I saw, for the first time in my life, a grizzly bear! We must have seen each other at the same moment, for we advanced at the same time. He was an immense animal, but nearly starved to death like myself. I raised my rifle and fired, but I must have been too much excited to take good aim. I found afterwards that my ball had taken effect in his shoulder, but then I did not know it. We advanced towards each other until we met. I well remember his small red eye as he glared upon me, and the fierce snapping of his jaws, covered as they were with bloody foam. I had heard from old hunters of this terrible animal—that everything fled before him—that bullets had no perceptible effect on his hide, and that his attack was certain death; but if I thought of any of these things at all, they must have been lost sight of in the

maddening rage inspired by the near prospect of food. If, instead of one bear, there had been a dozen, I should have thrown myself on the nearest!

"We met! I bear on this shoulder (here it is, I'll show it to you) the mark of our first collision. I did not feel it then, though it has left, as you see, an ugly scar. I afterwards examined my first blow, and found, just behind his left shoulder, a large gap where my knife had entered. We were now hand to hand. I was determined he should not escape me. Death here was preferable to death in the camp. My antagonist seemed inspired with the same determination, and blow and thrust were given with fearful frequency, and in profound silence. We fought from the same frightful cause! Famine had rendered us both perfectly reckless of life. Oh, Brutus! how I missed you then! One good five minutes' service would have saved me many a hard blow, and many an ugly scar!

"At length a well-directed thrust, or an accidental slip in the blood, threw the bear upon his side. I was upon him in a moment! The efforts he made with his fearful claws (I have one of them at home now) nearly unseated me, but my knife was as busy as his claws. I do not know how long this contest might have lasted, or how it might have ended, but fortunately he seized my powder-horn and wallet with his teeth. I had the presence of mind to thrust them still further down his throat, and while my left hand kept them there, my right hand was busy with my knife in his side. I soon found that suffocation would ensue, if I could continue this operation long enough. I scarcely know how I managed to keep my place on his body, for his struggling efforts were tremendous. But I did hold on, and at length perceived, to my great satisfaction, that they were getting less frequent and less violent. A few moments more, and a few more thrusts, terminated the contest, and my enemy lay dead before me!

"You need not ask me what was the first thing I did. If you had been there, as I was, you would have done likewise. I cut from his palpitating carcass morsel after morsel of his quivering flesh, and devoured them, raw and bloody as they were. My next thought was of my companions. I carried with me towards the camp part of the bear, and having hidden it in the neighbourhood, I awaited the return of the party. At length they dropped in, one by one, Joe Winn last. Feeling very comfortable, in spite of my wounds, which I had bound up, I was determined to punish Winn for his cruel slaughter of my dog, and I assumed as grave and dismal a face as the

agreeable state of my bowels would permit. The hunt had been, as usual, unsuccessful, and Joe's face was the very seat of anxious terror. As soon as the report had been made, I turned to Winn—

“‘Well, Joe, you have heard the report; are you ready to-night?’

“I do not know whether it was the sight of blood on my clothes, whether my satisfied look was by him construed into a smile, or whether his peculiar position made him unusually observant, but certain it is, that after fixing on me the intensest look I ever saw, he dropped on his knees and screamed between joy and anguish.

“‘Oh God! I'm saved! I'm saved! Tom's killed something. Look at his clothes, look at his mouth, look at the blood and hair! Lord God, I'm saved! I'm saved!’

“And the wretch sprang to his feet, and fairly danced.

“The latter part of this speech could not have been heard by any one save myself, for every man had started to his feet, and after surveying me for an instant, had dashed off, with Joe, into a dance, that, for wildness and fervour, would have shamed a Comanche. I soon satisfied their doubts, told them of my success, and of my having brought a part of the meat, and hidden it near the camp, and added—

“‘Now, boys, you know your condition. It won't do for you to cram like wolves, for it will hurt you; but if you will go with me (and here we all started), I'll show you the place where I hid it. Now walk up to it gently, and take a small bite, and go at it again. Now, yonder it is, under that little patch of sage. Don't hurry.’

“If you have ever seen a flock of wild pigeons dashing wildly through the woods, if you have ever seen a flock of partridges scattering along madly with a hawk in full pursuit, if ever you have seen a dozen horses started for a sweepstake, you may have seen good speed—but you never have seen any running like that. I fairly screamed with laughter. *And who do you think was the first man that reached the bush—it was Joe Winn.*

“The camp that night rang with jests upon poor Joe, and shouts of laughter would go up as some one would occasionally utter, in a dolorous tone—

“‘Dear Tom, I'll do anything in the world for you. Just say the word, Tom. Won't you say it, dear Tom?’

“On the next day we started for the remainder of the bear, and having saved everything, for fear of accident, we left for

home. This provision lasted until we reached game, and we at length arrived in the settlement in safety.

VI.

LYNCH-LAW IN THE "SUCKER STATE;" OR, HOW HANK HARRIS GOT SWEETENED.

THE little incident I am about to relate actually occurred at the place named, and some of the persons engaged in it can testify to the same.

About a mile above the village of C—a, on the opposite bank of the Ohio, and on that part of Kentucky known as "The Purchas," stands an old log-cabin, on a rising piece of ground some thirty yards from the river, just out of the reach of the Spring freshets, though at that time it is entirely surrounded by "back water," that covers the bottom land for miles above and below. A squatter had formerly kept a wood-yard there, though no one appeared to lay claim to the ownership; in fact, 'twas looked upon and used as public property.

One Sunday afternoon, two long "dug-outs," loaded with "plunder" (a term in the West for baggage, &c.), stopped at the cabin, which was then uninhabited, and shortly afterwards a smoke was seen, and several persons to be moving around. This was the family and property of Hank Harris, a large hickory-faced, bushy-headed-looking fellow, with his wife and three children. They took up their abode at the old wood-yard, and remained about three months. The history of Harris, that is, what little we heard of it, was not calculated to raise him much in the estimation of the inhabitants of C—a.

It was reported by some flat-boat men that "tied up" one night at the village, that Harris "hed left Paduky 'tween two days, and no one hed seed a site on him since;" also that "Hank was an orful piert hand with his shootin'-iron, and as he never feed ary hog, the folks there thought he et more pork than he paid fur or come by *on the squar*;" and also, that one day Harris was kindly allowed twenty-four hours to "pack up en travel." One day Hank tied his canoe to the Illinois side, and came up to Bill Hughes's store and exchanged some deer-skins for "store truck"—meal, and a jug of "Ole Recty," as

he called it; that night screams were heard from Harris's cabin, and his boys told us "Dad hed been trainin' th' ole 'ooman with hick'ries," and as such cries were often heard, both from his wife and boys, Harris began to be shunn'd and hated. He was, when sober, silent and morose, and when in liquor (which was whenever he could get it), he was quarrelsome and fierce; he had fought several times with some of the villagers, and they were generally badly punished. Harris always carried his rifle and hunting-knife with him, which was a common thing in that country, though, as he lived just across the river, he had no use for them. A couple of snarling, ugly curs, always followed him, and he appeared to think more of them than of his children. The people of C——a were anxious to get rid of him, as some of their hogs had strayed off, and hadn't returned, but they had not sufficient cause to give him a hint "to travel." They didn't have to wait long, though, for one day, while in liquor, he beat and nearly killed an old hunter who was a general favourite with the settlers, having been in all the border wars with the red-skins.

Some dozen men met in Bill Hughes's store, and agreed to rid themselves of Harris at once; and forming themselves into a band of "Regulators," under Hughes and Bill Riley (a large powerful fellow), they laid their plans, and put them into execution at once. Two or three of them lounged in Demmit's store, where Harris was drinking and bantering the bystanders to fight. Bill Riley entered first, and as one of Harris's dogs stood *convenient*, Riley kicked in a *few* of his ribs, by way of a starter.

"Cuss you, Bill Riley, wot'd ye kick my dog fur? You'r the biggest man 'mong these yere suckers, but I ken jist knock the 'hind sites' orf er you, or ary other sneakin' devil in this crowd."

Bill was a peaceable, honest wood-cutter, and more than a match for Harris when he (Harris) was in liquor; but it was part of the plan for Bill and Harris to quarrel, or Bill would not have kicked his dog.

"Lay down that thar shootin'-iron en knife, and you shall swaller that ar lie or yer teeth, you hog-stealin' cus!"

"Hoopee! fact," sung out Bill Hughes.

The *tools* were laid down on the counter, and they stepped out in front of the store and clinched. A western rough-and-tumble fight is understood generally to be a "bite and gouge" affair, and I will leave the description to the imagination of the reader. I never saw a fiercer, and hope I shall never see a

more bloody one. Harris soon intimated that Bill needn't *chaw his countenance any more*, and that he'd *got'nuff*.

"I've licked you in a fair fight, Hank Harris, and now we're gwine to pay fer 'busin ole Uncle Nat. Come, boys."

"I'll make buzzard's bait of some on ye fust!" yelled Harris, as he sprang to the counter for his knife and pistol. *They were gone!*

The furious struggle that man made to free himself from the hands of the Regulators, were terrible. Young as I was at the time, I shall never forget them—he raved and cursed most horribly, and fairly foamed at the mouth.

"Boys, fetch some cat-line and a rail—a good sharp 'un," sang out Riley.

"Yes, and a bar'l of tar and some feathers," said Hughes.

The two first were easily procured, but tar was not to be had, and as to feathers, the settlers in C—a were strangers to such luxuries; consequently, they were *non comatibus in swampo*.

"Boys," said Bill Hughes, "go up to my store and roll down a bar'l of m'lasses: we'll *sweeten this hunter of Kentucky*."

"He's gin many a hog the ear-ache," said another.

Harris said not a word, but his eyes looked the fierce rage that burned within him, while his teeth were hard set and lips compressed. The barrel of molasses was brought and the head stove in.

"Now, boys, pick cotton like Mississip' niggers, while we *peal* him," said Riley.

Peal'd, and with hands and feet tied, Riley and Hughes lifted him and *dipped* him *candlewise* several times into the thick molasses.

"Now, then, *shut pan*, ole feller, or ye'll get *sweetened inside and out*," said Hughes, as Harris's feet cut a half circle in the air, and his head disappeared down in the barrel.

"You cussed suckers, will you strangle me?" he sputtered out when his head came to daylight.

"Wal, yes, putty much, not quite, I reckon," said one of the Regulators; and down went the bushy head again.

"*Thar, you is sweetened!*" said Riley. "Now, boys, we'll gin him a *dressin'*," and the little patches of cotton were plastered on thick.

"Thar, you look like a *spectable white man*, Hank Harris! A gen'lman in disguise," said Hughes.

"Jist rite for them Orleans fancy-dress and masquerade balls," said another.

"If you don't keep a carriage, you shall travel by *rail-road*," said Bill Riley, as they seated him on the edge of the rail, and tied his hands and feet, and, with one on each side, trotted him about the village, giving him rather more jolting, however, than, as a passenger on a *rail-road*, he might expect.

"Thar, boys, we'll gin him a chance to pay his rent in Kentuck, and make *swankey* of the Ohio," said Hughes, as they placed him in a skiff, which they rowed to a sand-bar near the other shore; here they tied him to an old snag, and placed his rifle (without a flint) and a knife beside him, and left him there—the Ohio River *rising eight inches an hour*. As they started for the shore, the Regulators sang out—

"You won't shoot nary nuther hog, Hank Harris!"

"Nor gouge ole Uncle Nat, I reckon."

"You won't hick'ry your wife much more, ole hoss!"

"Who's buzzard's bait now, Hank Harris?"

"I'll gin yer dogs a pill as 'ill settle their stomicks for 'em, Hank."

"Buffalo fish is great on cotton, you know, Harris!"

The next morning, the bar was covered, also the snag, and Hank Harris *was not to be seen*. The Regulators visited his cabin; his family and "plunder" were gone. He would have undoubtedly been left to perish on the bar, but for his wife, who, notwithstanding his treatment of her, clung to him to the last. She went to him after dark, released him, took him home, cleansed and clothed him, and, packing up, they floated out of the Ohio and down the muddy Mississippi, and we never saw them again. Some six months after, a steam-boat got aground on the "Little Chain," about two miles above C—a, and I took my little dug-out and paddled to her, to get some good cigars and hear the news from below. From the clerk I learned that a man answering Hank Harris's description had been killed in a fight with the blacklegs at "Natchez-under-the-Hill."

VII.

THE TRAVELLING TIN-MAN.

“And indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad; therefore it behoves men to be wary.”—*Shakespeare.*

MICAJAH WARNER was owner and cultivator of a small farm in one of the oldest, most fertile, and most beautiful counties of the State of Pennsylvania, not far from the Maryland line. Micajah was a plain quaker, and a man of quiet and primitive habits. He was totally devoid of all ambitious cravings after tracts of ten thousand acres, and he aspired not to the honour and glory of having his name given to a town in the western wilderness,—though *Warnerville* would not have sounded badly—neither was he possessed of an unconquerable desire of becoming a judge, or of going to Congress. Therefore, he had always been able to resist the persuasions and example of those of his neighbours, who left the home of their fathers, and the comforts of an old settlement, to seek a less tedious road to wealth and consequence, on the other side of the Alleghany. He was satisfied with the possession of two hundred acres, one half of which he had lent (not given) to his son Israel, who expected shortly to be married to a very pretty and very notable young woman in the neighbourhood, who was, however, no heiress.

Upon this event, Israel was to be established in an old frame house that had long since been abandoned by his father, in favour of the substantial stone dwelling which the family occupied at the period of our story. The house had been taken up and transplanted to that part of the farm now allotted to Israel, and he very prudently deferred repairing it till he saw whether it survived its progress across the domain. But as it did not fall asunder during the journey, it was judged worthy of a new front door, new window-panes, and new shingles to cover the vast chasms of the roof; all which improvements were made by Israel's own hands. This house was deposited in the vicinity of the upper branch of the creek, and conveniently near to a saw-mill which had been built by Israel in person.

Like most of her sect, whether in town or country, Bulah,

the wife of Micajah Warner, was a woman of even temper, untiring industry, and great skill in housewifery. Her daughters, commonly called Amy and Orphy, were neat, pretty little quaker girls, extremely alert, and accustomed from their earliest childhood to assist in the work of the house. As her daughters were so handy and industrious, and only went half the year to school, Mrs Warner did not think it necessary to keep any other *help* than an indented negro girl, named Cloe.

Except the marriage of Israel, which was now in prospect; a flood in the neighbouring creek, which had raised the water so high as to wash away the brick oven from the side of the house; a tornado that carried off the roof of the old stable, and landed it whole in an adjoining clover field; and a visit from a family of beggars (an extraordinary phenomenon in the country); nothing occurred among the Warners for a long succession of years, that had occasioned more than a month's talk of the mother, and a month's listening of the children. "They kept the even tenor of their way." The occupations of Israel and his father (assisted occasionally by a few hired men) were, of course, those of the farm, except when Israel took a day, now and then, to attend his saw-mill.

With regard to domestic arrangements, everything connected with household affairs went on in the same course year after year, except that, as the daughters of the family improved in capability of work, Cloe, the black girl, retrograded. They washed on Monday (with the assistance of a woman, hired for the day), ironed on Tuesday, performed what they called "the little baking" on Wednesday, and "the big baking" on Friday; cleaned the house on Saturday, and clear-starched their book-muslin collars; rode on horseback to Friends' meeting on Sunday morning, and visited their neighbours on Sunday afternoon.

It was the day after the one on which Israel and his bride-elect had passed meeting, and, consequently, a month before the one fixed for the wedding, that something like an adventure fell among the Warner family.

It was a beautiful evening at the close of August. The father and son had been all day in the meadows, mowing the second crop of grass; Mrs Warner was darning stockings in the porch, with her two daughters knitting on the bench beside her; Amy being then fourteen, and Orphy about twelve. Cloe was absent, having been borrowed by a relation, about five miles off, to do the general work of the house, while the family were engaged in preparing for a quilting frolic.

"Come, girls," said Mrs Warner to her daughters, "it's just sun-down. The geese are coming home, and daddy and Israel will soon be here. Amy, do thee go down to the spring-house and bring up the milk and butter; and, Orphy, thee can set the table."

The two girls put up their knitting (not, however, till they had knit to the middle of the needle), and in a short time Amy was seen coming back from the spring-house, with a large pitcher of milk and a plate of butter. In the mean time, Orphy had drawn out the ponderous claw-footed walnut table that stood all summer in the porch, and, spreading over it a brown linen cloth, placed in regular order their every-day supper equipage of pewter plates, earthen porringers, and iron spoons.

The viands consisted of an immense round loaf of bread, nearly as large as a grindstone, and made of wheat and Indian meal; the half of a huge cheese, a piece of cold pork, a peach pie, and an apple pie; and, as it had been baking day, there was the customary addition of a rice pudding, in an earthen pan of stupendous size. The last finish to the decorations of the table was a large bowl of cool water, placed near the seat occupied by the father of the family, who never could begin any of his meals without a copious draught of the pure element.

In a few minutes, the farmer and his son made their appearance as they turned the angle of the peach orchard fence, preceded by the geese, their usual avant-couriers, who went out every morning to feed in an old field beyond the meadows.

As soon as Micajah and Israel had hung up their scythes, and washed themselves at the pump, they sat down to table; the farmer in his own blue-painted, high-backed, high-armed chair; and Israel taking the seat always allotted to him, a low chair, the rushes of which having long since deserted the bottom, had been replaced by cross pieces of cloth listing, ingeniously interwoven with each other; and this being, according to the general opinion, the worst seat in the house, always fell to the share of the young man, who was usually passive on all occasions, and never seemed to consider himself entitled to the same accommodation as the rest of the family.

Suddenly, the shrill blast of a tin trumpet resounded through the woods that covered the hill in front of the house, to the great disturbance of the geese, which had settled themselves quietly for the night in their usual bivouac around the ruins of an old waggon. The Warners ceased their supper to listen and look; and they saw emerging from the woods, and rattling down the hill at a brisk trot, the cart of one of those

itinerant tin merchants, who originate in New England, and travel from one end of the Union to the other, avoiding the cities, and seeking customers among the country people; who, besides buying their ware, always invite them to a meal and a bed.

The tin-man came blowing his horn to the steps of the porch, and there stopping his cart, addressed the farmer's wife in the true nasal twang that characterizes the lower class of New Englanders, and inquired "if she had any notion of a bargain." She replied that "she believed that she had no occasion for anything;" her customary answers to all such questions. But Israel, who looked into futurity, and entertained views towards his own housekeeping, stepped forward to the tin-cart, and began to take down and examine various mugs, pans, kettles, and coffee-pots—the latter particularly, as he had a passion for coffee, which he secretly determined to indulge both morning and evening as soon as he was settled in his domicile.

"Mother," said Amy, "I do wish thee would buy a new coffee-pot, for ours has been leaking all summer, and I have to stop it every morning with rye meal. Thee knows we can give the old one to Israel."

"To be sure," replied Mrs Warner, "it will do well enough for young beginners. But I cannot say I feel quite free to buy a new coffee-pot at this time; I must consider about it."

"And there's the cullender," said Orphy, "it has such a big crack at the bottom, that when I am smashing the squashes for dinner, not only the water but the squashes themselves drip through. Better give it to Israel, and get a new one for ourselves."

"What's this?" she continued, taking up a tin water dipper.

"That's for dipping water out of the bucket," replied the tin-man.

"Oh, yes!" cried Amy, "I've seen such a one at Rachel Johnson's. What a clever thing it is! with a good long handle, so that there's no danger of splashing the water on our clothes. Do buy it, mother. Thee knows that Israel can have the big calabash: I patched it myself yesterday, where it was broken, and bound the edge with new tape, and it's now as good as ever."

"I don't know," said the farmer, "that we want anything but a new lantern, for ours had the socket burnt out long be-

fore these moonlight nights, and it's dangerous work taking a candle into the stable."

The tin-man knowing that our plain old farmers, though extremely liberal of everything that is produced on their plantations, are frequently very tenacious of coin, and much averse to parting with actual money, recommended his wares more on account of their cheapness than their goodness; and, in fact, the price of most of the articles was two or three cents lower than they could be purchased for at the stores.

Old Micajah thought there was no absolute necessity for anything except the lantern; but his daughters were so importunate for the coffee-pot, the cullender, and the water dipper, that finally all three were purchased and paid for. The tin-man in vain endeavoured to prevail on Mrs Warner to buy some large patty pans, which the girls looked at with longing eyes; and he reminded them how pretty their pumpkin pies would look at their next quilting, baked in scollop-edged tins. But this purchase was peremptorily refused by the good quaker woman, alleging that scollop-edged pies were all pride and vanity, and that if properly made, they were quite good enough baked in round plates.

The travelling merchant then produced divers boxes and phials of quack medicines, prepared at a celebrated manufactory of those articles, and duly sealed with the maker's own seal, and inscribed with his name in his own handwriting. Among these, he said, "there were certain cures for every complaint in natur; draps for the agur, the tooth-ache, and the rheumatiz; salves for ring-worms, corns, frost-bitten heels, and sore eyes, and pills for consumption and fall fevers; beside that most valuable of all physic, Swaim's Wormifuge."

The young people exclaimed with one accord against the purchase of any of the medicines; and business being over, the tin-man was invited by the farmer to sit down and take supper with the family—an invitation as freely accepted as given.

The twilight was now closing, but the full moon had risen, and afforded sufficient light for the supper-table in the porch. The tin-man took a seat, and before Mrs Warner had finished her usual invitation of "Stranger, reach to, and help thyself; we are poor hands at inviting, but thee's welcome to it, such as it is"—he had already cut himself a huge piece of the cold pork, and an enormous slice of bread. He next poured out a porringer of milk, to which he afterwards added one-third of the peach-pie, and several plates full of rice-pudding. He then

said, "I suppose you hav'nt got no cider about the house;" and Israel, at his father's desire, immediately brought up a pitcher of that liquor from the cellar.

During supper, the tin-man entertained his entertainers with anecdotes of the roguery of his own countrymen, or rather, as he called them, his "statesmen." In his opinion of their general dishonesty, Mrs Warner most cordially joined. She related a story of an itinerant Yankee, who persuaded her to empty some of her pillows and bolsters, under colour of exchanging with him old feathers for new—a thing which she acknowledged had puzzled her not a little, as she thought it strange that any man should bargain so badly for himself. He produced from his cart a bag of feathers which he declared were quite new; but, after his departure, she found that he had given her such short measure that she had not half enough to fill her ticking, and most of the feathers were proved, upon examination, to have belonged to chickens rather than to geese—nearly a whole cock's tail having been found amongst them.

The farmer pointed in to the open door of the house, and showed the tin-man a large wooden clock, put up without a case between two windows, the pendulum and the weights being "exposed and bare." This clock he had bought for ten dollars of a travelling Yankee who had set out to supply the country with these machines. It had only kept tolerable time for about two months, and had ever since been getting faster and faster, though it was still faithfully wound up every week. The hands were now going merrily round at the rate of ten miles an hour, and it never struck less than twelve.

The Yankee tin-man, with a candour that excited the admiration of the whole family, acknowledged that his statesmen were the greatest rogues "on the face of the yearth;" and recounted instances of their trickery that would have startled the belief of any but the inexperienced and credulous people who were now listening to him. He told, for example, of sausages being brought to market in the eastern towns, that when purchased and prepared for frying, were found to be filled with chopped turnip and shreds of red flannel.

For once, thought the Warners, we have found an honest Yankee.

They sat a long while at table, and though the tin-man seemed to talk all the time he was eating, the quantity of victuals that he caused to disappear surprised even Mrs Warner, accustomed as she was to the appetite of Israel.

When the Yankee had at last completed his supper, the farmer invited him to stay all night ; but he replied, "that it was moonshiny, and fine cool travellin' after a warm day ; he preferred putting on towards Maryland as soon as his creatur was rested, and had a feed."

He then, without more ceremony, led his horse and cart into the barn-yard, and stopping near the stable-door fed the animal by the light of the moon, and carried him a bucket of water from the pump.

The girls being reminded by their mother that it was late, and that the cows had long since come home, took their pails and went out to milk, while she washed up the supper things. While they were milking the subsequent dialogue took place between them :

Orphy. I know it's not right to notice strangers, and to be sure the man's welcome ; but, Amy, did thee ever see anybody take victuals like this Yankee ?

Amy. Yes, but he didn't eat all he took, for I saw him slip a great chunk of bread and cheese into his pocket, and then a big piece of pie, while he was talking and making us laugh.

Orphy. Well, I think a man must be very badly off to do such a thing. I wonder he did not ask for victuals to take away with him. He need not have been afraid. He must know that victuals is no object. And then he has travelled the road long enough to be sure that he can get a meal for nothing at any house he stops at, as all the tin-men do. He must have seen us looking at his eating so much, and may be his pride is hurt, and so he's made up his mind, all of a sudden, to take his meals no more at people's houses.

Amy. Then why can't he stop at a tavern, and pay for his victuals ?

Orphy. May be he don't want to spend his money in that trifling way. Who knows but he is saving it up to help an old mother, or to buy back land, or something of that sort ? I'll be bound he calculates upon eating nothing to-morrow but what he slipped off from our table.

Amy. All he took will not last him a day. It's a pity of him, anyhow.

Orphy. I wish he had not been too bashful to ask for victuals to take with him.

Amy. And still he did not strike me at all as a bashful man.

Orphy. Suppose we were just in a private way to put some victuals into his cart for him, without letting him know any-

thing about it? Let's hide it among the tins, and how glad he'll be when he finds it to-morrow!

Amy. So we will; that's an excellent notion! I never pitied anybody so much since the day the beggars came, which was five years ago last harvest, for I have kept count ever since; and I remember it as well as if it were yesterday.

Orphy. We don't know what a hard thing it is to want victuals, as the Irish schoolmaster used to tell us, when he saw us emptying pans of milk into the pig-trough, and turning the cows into the orchard to eat the heaps of apples lying under the trees.

Amy. Yes, and it must be much worse for an American to want victuals, than for people from the old countries who are used to it.

After they had finished their milking, and strained and put away the milk, the kind-hearted little girls proceeded to accomplish their benevolent purpose. They took from the large wire-safe in the cellar a pie, half a loaf of bread, and a great piece of cheese; and, putting them into a basket, they went to the barn-yard, intending to tell their mother as soon as the tin-man was gone, and not for a moment doubting her approval, since in the house of an American farmer victuals, as Orphy justly observed, is no object.

As they approached the barn-yard, they saw, by the light of the moon, the Yankee coming away from his cart and returning to the house. The girls crouched down behind the garden-fence till he had passed, and then cautiously proceeded on their errand. They went to the back of the cart, intending to deposit their provisions, when they were startled at seeing something evidently alive moving behind the round opening of the cover, and in a moment the head of a little black child peeped out of the hole.

The girls were so surprised that they stopped short and could not utter a word, and the young negro, evidently afraid of being seen, immediately popped down its head among the tins.

"Amy, did thee see that?" asked Orphy, in a low voice.

"Yes, I did so," replied Amy; "what can the Yankee be doing with that little neger, and why does he hide it? Let's go and ask the child."

"No, no!" exclaimed Orphy, "the tin-man will be angry."

"And who cares if he is?" said Amy; "he has done something he is ashamed of, and we need not be afraid of him."

They then went quite close to the back of the cart, and

Amy said, "Here, little snowball, show thyself and speak; and do not be afraid, for nobody's going to hurt thee."

"How did thee come into this cart?" asked Orphy, "and why does the Yankee hide thee? Tell us all about it, and be sure not to speak above thy breath."

The black child again peeped out of the hole, and looking cautiously round, said, "Are you quite sure the naughty man won't hear us."

"Quite sure," answered Amy, "but is thee boy or girl?"

"I'm a little gal," replied the child; and, with the characteristic volubility of her race, she continued, "and my name's Dinah, and I'm five year 'old, and my daddy and mammy are free coloured people, and they lives a big piece off, and daddy works out, and mammy sells gingerbread and molasses-beer, and we have a sign over the door with a bottle and cake on it."

Amy. But how did this man get hold of thee, if thy father and mother are free people? Thee can't be bound to him, or he need not hide thee.

Dinah. O, I know I an't bounded to him—I expect he stole me.

Amy. Stole thee! What here in the free State of Pennsylvania?

Dinah. I was out picking huckleberries in the woods up the road, and I strayed off a big piece from home. Then the tin-man comed along, driving his cart, and I run close to the road-side to look, as I always does when anybody goes by. So he told me to come into his cart, and he would give me a tin mug to put my huckleberries in, and I might choose it myself, and it would hold them a heap better than my old Indian basket. So I was very glad, and he lifted me up into the cart, and I choosed the very best and biggest tin mug he had, and emptied my huckleberries into it. And then he told me he'd give me a ride in his cart, and then he set me far back on a box, and he whipped his creatur, and druv and druv, and jolted me so that I tumbled all down among the tins. And then he picked me up, and tied me fast with his handkercher to one of the back posts of the cart to keep me steady, he said. And then, for all I was steady, I couldn't help crying, and I wanted him to take me home to daddy and mammy. But he only sniggered at me, and said he wouldn't, and bid me hush; and then he got mad, and because I couldn't hush up just in a minute, he whipped me quite smart.

Orphy. Poor little thing!

Dinah. And then I got frightened, for he put on a wicked

look, and said he'd kill me dead if I cried any more or made the least bit of noise. And so he has been carrying me along in his cart for two days and two nights, and he makes me hide away all the time, and he won't let nobody see me. And I hate him, and yesterday, when I know'd he didn't see me, I spit on the crown of his hat.

Amy. Hush!—thee must never say thee hates anybody.

Dinah. At night I sleeps upon the bag of feathers; and when he stops anywhere to eat, he comes sneaking to the back of the cart and pokes in victuals (he has just now brung me some), and he tells me he wants me to be fat and good-looking. I was afeard he was going to sell me to the butcher, as Nace Willet did his fat calf, and I thought I'd ax him about it, and he laughed and told me he was going to sell me sure enough, but not to a butcher. And I'm almost all the time very sorry, only sometimes I'm not, and then I should like to play with the tins, only he won't let me. I don't dare to cry out loud, for fear the naughty man would whip me; but I always moan when we're going through woods, and there's nobody in sight to hear me. He never lets me look out of the back of the cart, only when there's nobody to see me, and he won't let me sing even when I want to. And I moan most when I think of my daddy and mammy, and how they are wondering what has become of me; and I think moaning does me good, only he stops me short.

Amy. Now, Orphy, what's to be done? The tin-man has, of course, kidnapped this black child to take her into Maryland, where he can sell her for a good price; as she is a fat, healthy-looking thing, and that is a slave State. Does thee think we ought to let him take her off?

Orphy. No, indeed! I think I could feel free to fight for her myself—that is, if fighting were not forbidden by Friends. Yonder's Israel coming to turn the cows into the clover-field. Little girl, lie quiet, and don't offer to show thyself.

Israel now advanced—"Well, girls," said he, "what's thee doing at the tin-man's cart? Not meddling among his tins, I hope? Oh! the curiosity of women-folks!"

"Israel," said Amy, "step softly—we have something to show thee."

The girls then lifted up the corner of the cart cover, and displayed the little negro girl, crouched upon the bag of feathers—a part of his merchandise which the Yankee had not thought it expedient to produce, after hearing Mrs Warner's anecdote of one of his predecessors.

The young man was much amazed, and his two sisters began both at once to relate to him the story of the black child. Israel looked almost indignant. His sisters said to him, "To be sure we won't let the Yankee carry this child off with him."

"I judge we won't," answered Israel.

"Then," said Amy, "let us take her out of the cart, and hide her in the barn or somewhere, till he has gone."

"No," replied Israel, "I can't say I feel free to do that. It would be too much like stealing her over again; and I've no notion of evening myself to a Yankee in any of his ways. Put her down in the cart and let her alone. I'll have no under-handed work about her. Let's all go back to the house; mother has got down all the broken crockery from the top shelf in the corner cupboard, and the Yankee's mending it with a sort of stuff like sticks of sealing-wax, that he carries about with him; and I dare say he'll get her to pay him more for it than the things are worth. But say nothing."

The girls cautioned Dinah not to let the tin-man know that they had discovered her, and to keep herself perfectly quiet: and they then accompanied their brother to the house, feeling very fidgetty and uneasy.

They found the table covered with old bowls, old tea-pots, old sugar-dishes, and old pitchers; whose fractures the Yankee was cementing together, while Mrs Warner held the candle, and her husband viewed the operation with great curiosity.

"Israel," said his mother, as he entered, "this friend is making the china as good as new, only that we can't help seeing the join; and we are going to give all the mended things to thee."

The Yankee, having finished his work and been paid for it, said it was high time for him to be about starting, and he must go and look after his cart. He accordingly left the house for that purpose; and Israel, looking out at the end window, exclaimed, "I see he's not coming round to the house again, but he's going to try the short cut into the back road. I'll go and see that he puts up the bars after him."

Israel went out, and his sisters followed him to see the tin-man off.

The Yankee came to the bars, leading his horse with the cart, and found Israel there before him.

"Are you going to let down the bars for me?" said the tin-man.

"No," replied Israel, "I'm not going to be so polite; but

I intend to see that thee carries off nothing more than belongs to thee."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Yankee, changing colour.

"I expect I can show thee," answered Israel. Then, stepping up to the back of the cart, and putting in his hands, he pulled out the black child and held her up before him, saying, "Now, if thee offers to touch this girl, I think we shall be apt to differ."

The tin-man then advanced towards Israel, and with a menacing look raised his whip; but the fearless young quaker (having consigned the little girl to his sisters, who held her between them) immediately broke a stick from a tree that grew near, and stood on the defensive with a most steadfast look of calm resolution.

The Yankee went close up to him, brandishing his whip; but before he had time to strike, Israel with the utmost coolness, and with great strength and dexterity, seized him by the collar, and swinging him round to some distance, flung him to the ground with such force as to stun him, saying, "Mind, I don't call myself a fighting character; but if thee offers to get up, I shall feel free to keep thee down."

The tin-man began to move, and the girls ran shrieking to the house of their father, dragging with them the little black girl, whose screams (as is usual with all of her colour) were the loudest of the loud.

In an instant the stout old farmer was at the side of his son, and, notwithstanding the struggles of the Yankee, they succeeded by main force in conveying him to the stable, into which they fastened him for the night.

Early next morning, Israel and his father went to the nearest magistrate for a warrant and a constable, and were followed home by half the township. The county court was then in session; the tin-man was tried, and convicted of having kidnapped a free black child, with the design of selling her as a slave in one of the southern States; and he was punished by fine and imprisonment.

The Warner family would have felt more compassion for him than they did, only that all the mended china fell apart again the next day, and his tins were so badly soldered that all their bottoms came out before the end of the month.

Mrs Warner declared that she had done with Yankee tin-men for ever, and in short with all other Yankees. But the store-keeper, Philip Thompson, who was the most sensible man

of the neighbourhood, and took two Philadelphia newspapers, convinced her that some of the best and greatest men America can boast of were natives of the New England States. And he even asserted that in the course of his life (and his age did not exceed sixty-seven) he had met with no less than five *perfectly* honest Yankee tin-men; and, besides being honest, two of them were not in the least impudent. Among the latter, however, he did not, of course, include a very handsome fellow, that a few years since made the tour of the United States with his tin-cart, calling himself the Boston Beauty, and wearing his own miniature round his neck.

To conclude,—an advertisement having been inserted in several of the papers, to designate where Dinah, the little black girl, was to be found, and the tin-man's trial having also been noticed in the public prints, in about a fortnight her father and mother (two very decent free negroes) arrived to claim her, having walked all the way from their cottage at the extremity of the next county. They immediately identified her, and the meeting was most joyful to them and to her. They told at full length every particular of their anxious search after their child, which was ended by a gentleman bringing a newspaper to their house, containing the welcome intelligence that she was safe at Micajah Warner's.

Amy and Orphy were desirous of retaining little Dinah in the family, and as the child's parents seemed very willing, the girls urged their mother to keep her instead of Cloe, who they said could be very easily made over to Israel. But, to the astonishment of the whole family, Israel on this occasion proved refractory, declaring that he would not allow his wife to be plagued with such an imp as Cloe, and that he chose to have little Dinah himself, if her parents would bind her to him till she was eighteen. The affair was soon satisfactorily arranged.

Israel was married at the appointed time, and took possession of the house near the saw-mill. He prospered; and in a few years was able to buy a farm of his own, and to build a stone house on it. Dinah turned out extremely well, and the Warner family still talk of the night when she was discovered in the cart of the travelling tin-man.

VIII.

A QUILTING.

I MUST tell you, however, of a quilting which I did not share with Mr Sibthorpe, though I wished for him many times during the afternoon. It was held at the house of a very tidy neighbour, a Mrs Boardman, the neatness of whose dwelling and its out-works I have often admired in passing. She invited all the neighbours, and of course included my unworthy self, although I had never had any other acquaintance than that which may be supposed to result from John and Sophy's having boarded with her for some time. The walking being damp, an ox cart was sent round for such of the guests as had no "team" of their own, which is our case as yet. This equipage was packed with hay, over which was disposed, by way of *musnud*, a blue and white coverlet; and by this arrangement half a dozen goodly dames, including myself, found reclining room, and were carried at a stately pace to Mrs Boardman's. Here we found a collection of women busily occupied in preparing the quilt, which you may be sure was a curiosity to me. They had stretched the lining on a frame, and were now laying fleecy cotton on it with much care; and I understood from several aside remarks which were not intended for the ear of our hostess, that a due regard for etiquette required that this laying of the cotton should have been performed before the arrival of the company, in order to give them a better chance for finishing the quilt before tea, which is considered a point of honour.

However, with so many able hands at work, the preparations were soon accomplished. The "bats" were smoothly disposed, and now consenting hands, on either side,

Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red—

wherein stars and garters, squares and triangles, figured in every possible relation to each other, and produced, on the whole, a very pretty mathematical piece of work, on which the eyes of Mrs Boardman rested with no small amount of womanly pride.

Now needles were in requisition, and every available space

round the frame was filled by a busy dame. Several of the company being left-handed, or rather ambidextrous (no unusual circumstance here), this peculiarity was made serviceable at the corners, where common seamstresses could only sew in one direction, while these favoured individuals could turn their double power to double account. This beginning of the solid labour was a serious time. Scarcely a word was spoken beyond an occasional request for the thread, or an exclamation at the snapping of a needle. This last seemed of no unfrequent occurrence, as you may well suppose, when you think of the thickness of the materials, and the necessity for making at least tolerably short stitches. I must own that the most I could accomplish for the first hour was the breaking of needles, and the pricking of my fingers, in the vain attempt to do as I was bid, and take my stitches "clear through."

By and by it was announced that it was time to roll—and all was bustle and anxiety. The frame had to be taken apart at the corners, and two of the sides rolled several times with much care, and at this diminished surface we began again with renewed spirit. Now all tongues seemed loosened. The evidence of progress had raised everybody's spirits, and the strife seemed to be who should talk fastest without slackening the industry of her fingers. Some held *tête-à-tête* communications with a crony in an under-tone; others discussed matters of general interest more openly; and some made observations at nobody in particular, but with a view to the amusement of all. Mrs Vining told the symptoms of each of her five children through an attack of the measles; Mrs Keteltas gave her opinion as to the party most worthy of blame in a late separation in the village; and Miss Polly Mittles said she hoped the quilt would not be "scant of stitches, like a bachelor's shirt."

Tea-time came before the work was completed, and some of the more generous declared they would rather finish it before tea. These offers fell rather coldly, however, for a real tea-drinker does not feel very good-humoured just before tea. So Mr Boardman drove four stout nails in the rafters overhead, corresponding in distance with the corners of the quilt, and the frame was raised and fastened to these, so as to be undisturbed and yet out of the way during the important ceremony that was to succeed. Is it not well said that "necessity is the mother of invention"?

A long table was now spread, eked out by boards laid upon carpenters' "horses,"—and this was covered with a variety of table-cloths, all shining clean, however, and carefully disposed.

The whole table array was equally various, the contributions, I presume, of several neighbouring log-houses. The feast spread upon it included every variety that ever was put upon a tea-table; from cake and preserves to pickles and raw cabbage cut up in vinegar. Pies there were, and custards, and sliced ham, and cheese, and three or four kinds of bread. I could do little besides look, and try to guess out the dishes. However, everything was very good, and our hostess must have felt complimented by the attention paid to her various delicacies. The cabbage, I think, was rather the favourite; vinegar being one of the rarities of a settler's cabin.

I was amused to see the loads of cake and pie that accumulated upon the plates of the guests. When all had finished, most of the plates seemed full. But I was told afterwards that it was not considered civil to decline any one kind of food, though your hostess may have provided a dozen. You are expected at least to try each variety. But this leads to something which I cannot think very agreeable.

After all had left the table, our hostess began to clear it away, that the quilt might be restored to its place: and, as a preliminary, she went all round to the different plates, selecting such pieces of cake as were but little *bitten*, and paring off the half-demolished edges with a knife, in order to replace them in their original circular position in the dishes. When this was accomplished, she assiduously scraped from the edges of the plates the scraps of butter that had escaped demolition, and wiped them back on the remains of the pat. This was doubtless a season of delectation to the economical soul of Mrs Boardman; you may imagine its effects upon the nerves of your friend. Such is the influence of habit! The good woman doubtless thought she was performing a praiseworthy action, and one in no wise at variance with her usual neat habits; and if she could have peeped into my heart, and there have read the resolutions I was tacitly making against breaking bread again under the same auspices, she would have pitied or despised such a lamentable degree of pride and extravagance. So goes this strange world.

The quilt was replaced, and several good housewives seated themselves at it, determined to "see it out." I was reluctantly compelled to excuse myself, my inexperienced fingers being pricked to absolute rawness. But I have since ascertained that the quilt was finished that evening, and placed on Mrs Boardman's best bed immediately; where indeed I see it every time I pass the door, as it is not our custom to keep our hand-

some things in the background. There were some long stitches in it, I know, but they do not show as far as the road ; so the quilt is a very great treasure, and will probably be kept as an heir-loom.

I have some thoughts of an attempt in the "patchwork" line myself. One of the company at Mrs Boardman's remarked that the skirt of the French cambric dress I wore would make a "splendid" quilt. It is a temptation, certainly.

Mr Sibthorpe's vexations and trials with his workmen are neither few nor small, but I shall leave the description for his pen. We never enjoyed better health, for which I fear we are not as thankful as we ought to be for so great a blessing.

IX.

A RUNNING FIGHT UPON THE RACKENSAC.

IN the fall, I found myself in Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, and very tired, too, of that "brisk" little city. I came to the determination, therefore, of leaving it, and going down the river.

As ill luck would have it, there was but one boat bent upon the downward trip, and that a small one, a very small one indeed. To look at her as she lay by the landing, she reminded you of a large hen-coop, with a stove-pipe sticking out of the roof. She was so small that the most remote point of her that you could reach from the furnace, was just near enough to subject you to the agreeable process of a slow baking ; and Heaven knows an Arkansas sun is, about this season, hot enough of itself. She was named the "Olive Branch," though a less appropriate name could hardly have been thought of—for instead of being a boat of pacific principles, she was the most quarrelsome, card-playing, whiskey-drinking little craft, it has ever been my misfortune to put my foot upon. Thoroughly tired, however, of "life in Little Rock," I had made up my mind to leave it ; so on the morning of the boat's departure, I stepped aboard, paid my passage-money, and was soon on my way down stream. My fellow-passengers amounted to about two dozen—rough-looking fellows—hunters, planters, traders, and "legs," all on their way for the lower country.

About ten miles below Little Rock, our captain put in to

the shore, and took on board a tall lathy gentleman, with a peculiar hang-dog look, whom I had frequently seen in the city, and who went by the *sobriquet* of "THE COLONEL." I imagine that he held some public office in the "Rackensac" capital.

The evening before our departure I had accidentally overheard the following fragment of a dialogue between him and the captain of the "Olive Branch."

"You'll take me through for two hundred, cap'n?"

"Three hundred, Ke-nel—*three*—not a figger less."

"Too much, cap'n—say two-fifty?"

"No! three hundred—look at the risk!"

"Oh, hang the risk!"

"Besides, it hurts the repitation of the boat."

"Say you'll take two-seventy!"

"No! the even three hundred, I'll take you through as slick as goose grease—I've said it, and by —— I'll do it in spite of all."

"Well, I suppose you must have it—here; you'll find me in Willis's Woods, ten miles below. What time will you be down?"

"By ten in the morning, or a leetle after."

"Very well, I'll wait for you."

So saying, the Colonel walked off, and I saw no more of him until he became my fellow-passenger at Willis's Woods.

From what I had heard and seen, I concluded that he had found the "Rock" a little too hot for him. All this, however, was no business of mine; and getting as far from the furnace as I could, I sat down by the after-guard, determined upon making myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. The excessive heat had made me drowsy, and I soon fell fast asleep.

"They are comin', captin! they're comin'; By ——, that's old Waley on the gray! I could tell him ten miles off!"

These words, with an unusual running to and fro over the boat, awoke me from my nap, and on starting up and looking towards the shore, I beheld about a dozen horsemen coming at full gallop down the bank of the river, and apparently endeavouring to overtake the boat. They were mostly dressed in jean coats, with broad-brimmed white hats, and each of them balanced upon his left shoulder about six feet of a Kentucky rifle. They were the sheriff and his posse in pursuit of a runaway defaulter, who was supposed to be on board the "Branch."

"What's to be done, cap'n?" inquired the Colonel, evidently alarmed at the approach of the sheriff's party.

"Done! why nothing! Do you s'pose I'm goin' to let that party stop my boat?"

"But they may fire upon you!"

"Let them fire and be hang'd! Didn't I expect all that? Here, Bill! Nick! get out the muskets, and make ready to handle 'em! Look out, passengers! go to larbord and get behind the cabin! Now, Nettles, keep her close to the bank, and give 'em a wide berth! Do you hear?"

Not having any ambition to be killed in the quarrel of an Arkansas defaulter, I took the captain's hint and got behind the cabin, where I found most of my fellow-passengers already assembled. We had hardly ensconced ourselves in a safe corner, when the voice of "Old Waley" roared out from the shore—

"Stop the boat, or we'll fire into her!"

"Fire and be hang'd!" was the captain's reply.

He had hardly uttered the words, when a bullet was heard crashing through the glass top of the wheel-house. I could not help thinking that Mr Nettles, the pilot, was placed in rather a nettlish position, but it appeared afterwards that the lower part of the wheel-house was lined with strong sheet-iron, and was bullet proof. Whether this precaution had been taken in anticipation of such skirmishes, I never learnt; at all events, it was useful in the present emergency, as Mr Nettles in a crouching position could sufficiently manage the boat, while he was sheltered from the shot to all intents and purposes.

Bang!—spang!—whiz! and several bullets came crashing through the slight frame-work of the cabin-windows; some struck the wheel-house, while others glanced upon the iron chimneys, causing them to ring and vibrate.

But our captain, upon his side, was not idle, and a volley of musketry from the crew sent two or three of the sheriff's officers sprawling upon the bank.

In this way a running fire was kept up for several miles—the boat going at the top of her speed—while the sheriff and his posse kept pace with her, galloping along the bank, loading and firing in their stirrups.

Victory, however, declared for our captain, for the river gradually widened, and as the boat was kept closer to the larboard bank, the rifle bullets fell far short of their mark. Seeing this, the pursuing party were reluctantly compelled to halt,

expressing in their looks and gestures the highest degree of anger and mortification.

"Come, boys," shouted the captain, "give them a last volley and a cheer!"

A volley of musketry was followed by a loud cheering from every part of the little boat, in which even the passengers joined, so exciting is the cheer of victory, even in a bad cause.

"Now, Kernel," cried the captain, "I've got you out of a tarnal scrape—ten thousand at least—so we expect you to stand treat for all hands! Hurrah! bring on the licker!"

X.

THE WAY OLD BILL WENT OFF.

FATHER WILLIAM, or, as he was familiarly known, "Old Bill," was an early settler "out West." He left the old North State when young, and settled in a choice spot, near one of our little streams. He grew and prospered, and not many years after he was married, and from that time than he a more influential personage could not be found. He was Justice of the Peace, held two or three posts of honour, and could knock daylight out of a turkey's eye two hundred yards with his favourite gun. I remember several of his exploits in shooting; and one of them would not be out of place here. I heard it from "Old Bill" himself. He had a fine young horse once, he said, stolen from his stable, and he set out to overtake the thief, taking his favourite piece along for company. His horse was shod different from any other, and he tracked him to a thicket, through that, and for two days, when he lost sight of his track. "Here," said Old Bill, "I began to give out; but I knew the boys would laugh at me, and I'd never hear the end of it if I didn't bring him back. Presently I heard some one whistling away ahead of me, and rode fast to catch up. Turning round a bunch of vines, who should I see but the man on my horse; and just at that time he looked back and saw me. Then we had it. He spurred and I kicked, and both our horses seemed to fly. We ran almost 'mile a minit' for three hours, and neither gained an inch. He was running for life, and I for my horse. But I couldn't pull up to him no way, for he was on

the best horse. I had my gun, but was afraid to shoot. I found I couldn't do any other way, for he was now a hundred yards ahead, and gaining. I raised my gun, let it fall to a gentle level, and took aim at the saddle girth. *It cut it easy one hundred and thirty yards!* and the rider fell to the ground in the saddle. I got my horse, and left the rascal whipping the saddle alone. I never heard of him after that. Whether he got to his journey's end I never heard, but *I made a good shot, and took my horse back to his paster!*"

"Old Bill," in his early days, went through many troubles, and often thought his day of grace was nearly ended. He would give up to the "*hyppo*," and when in one of his ways, he'd keep his bed for weeks at a time, trying to "settle up" accounts, but he couldn't make it out. During this time he wouldn't say a word, but "*I'm not long for this world.*" Fifteen years after his horse-race—he was getting along in years then—he went off. A deep snow covered the ground, and he could not venture beyond his door. He curled himself up in bed, and for two days his eyes were closed, and he spoke not a word. His couch was watched in silence—his pulse quick—his breathing compressed; but the fourth evening he came to. His boys, who had watched by his side, were now relieved, a good dinner was prepared, "Old Bill" ate heartily, and, after a social drink all round, the boys were for a hunt.

"You musn't go, boys—I begin to feel like going off," said Old Bill, with a sigh.

"Come, daddy, you're well—never was better in your life!" said one of the boys.

"Better not go—you shan't—you'll find me *dead* when you get back," continued the old man, returning to bed.

"But we must, daddy. We'll make a big fire for you, and we'll have a fine roast when we return," said the boys, and off they started.

Old Bill got mad as "tucker," because the boys left him, and jumped right out of bed, put on his thick coat, went out to the wood-pile, cut a small cart-load of wood, carried it into the house, and raised a roasting fire. He then warmed his feet cleverly, undressed, jumped back into bed, and sent over for 'Squire T. to *write his will*.

The 'Squire took paper and started, but recollecting a fresh demijohn of the best French brandy, he turned back and filled a quart bottle for his use while writing the will. He found Old Bill in bed, anxiously awaiting him.

"Well, 'Squire, I'm not long for this world; I'm sinking

very fast. I want you to write my will," said the old gentleman.

"Sorry to find you so low, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire.

"I've been sinking a long time, but I kept it to myself. I don't think I shall live till morning."

The 'Squire put on his "specks," unrolled his paper, and proceeded to his duty, as Old Bill thought. He wrote along, stopping now and then to ask a few questions. He took down the small articles first, and stopped to take a *horn*, and set the bottle on the table.

"What's that, 'Squire?" asked Old Bill, sorter bracin' himself up.

"Nothin' but *ink*, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire.

A long list of articles was put on paper, and the 'Squire turned up the bottle again. He smacked his lips, and proceeded with due solemnity to finish his task. This done, he wiped his eyes and commenced reading.

"Draw up your chair a little closter, 'Squire."

The 'Squire did as requested, and read aloud.

"It's all right, 'Squire; but you've not got all the things down yet."

The 'Squire stept to the door, and Old Bill reached over to the table to get the paper, but his fancied weakness prevented him.

"I'm nearly gone! Oh, them naughty boys! I knew I'd *die* before they got back; they'll see it now!"

"Well, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire, "won't you take a glass with me before you go?"

"Take a *what*?—what's *that*?—take a gl—," said Old Bill, sharply.

The 'Squire knew where to touch him. He had seen him that way before. He took a notion to go off every year, or every time the boys didn't go the way he wanted them. Old Bill sat up in the bed while the 'Squire handed him a glass of *brandy*. The old fellow drank it off like he was used to it.

"I'm getting better *now*, 'Squire. You needn't take down them other articles yet!"

"Suppose you get up, Uncle Bill, and let us talk over things, *before you go*!"

Old Bill's "dander riz" at that, and he with it—almost mad enough to *whip* the 'Squire. Both of them took seats by the fire; the table between them, and liquor and sweetenin' plenty. Glass after glass was laid in the shade, until both got up to the third story. The boys, meanwhile, had returned, and

posted an old fiddler at the chimney corner, and then stole into the room.

"I tell you, 'Squire, I've got the *best* gun in——," he stopped short like he heard something. "What's that?" hollered Old Bill, as the sounds came faster. "Darned if it ain't old Josey with his fiddle. Won't you take a *reel*, 'Squire?" The 'Squire took him at his word. The boys joined them, and about two hours before day, the two old "hosses" were so mellow that they had to be carried to bed. And that's the "*way Old Bill went off!*"

XI.

THE PRAIRIE AND THE SWAMP. AN ADVENTURE IN LOUISIANA.

It was a sultry September afternoon in the year 18—. My friend Carleton and myself had been three days wandering about the prairies, and had nearly filled our tin boxes and other receptacles with specimens of rare and curious plants. But we had not escaped paying the penalty of our zeal as naturalists, in the shape of a perfect roasting from the sun, which had shot down its rays during the whole time of our ramble, with an ardour only to be appreciated by those who have visited the Louisianian prairies. What made matters worse, our little store of wine had been early expended; some taffia, with which we had replenished our flasks, had also disappeared; and the water we met with, besides being rare, contained so much vegetable and animal matter, as to be undrinkable unless qualified in some manner. In this dilemma, we came to a halt under a clump of hickory trees, and despatched Martin, Carleton's Acadian servant, upon a voyage of discovery. He had assured us that we must ere long fall in with some party of Americans—or Cochon Yankees, as he called them—who, in spite of the hatred borne them by the Acadians and Creoles, were daily becoming more numerous in the country.

After waiting, in anxious expectation of Martin's return, for a full hour, during which the air seemed to get more and more sultry, my companion began to wax impatient. "What can the fellow be about?" cried he. "Give a blast on the horn," he added, handing me the instrument: "I cannot sound

it myself, for my tongue cleaves to my palate from heat and drought."

I put the horn to my mouth and gave a blast. But the tones emitted were not the clear echo-awakening sounds that cheer and strengthen the hunter. They were dull and short, as though the air had lost all elasticity and vibration, and by its weight crushed back the sounds into the horn. It was a warning of some inscrutable danger. We gazed around us, and saw that others were not wanting.

The spot where we had halted was on the edge of one of the pine forests that extend, almost without interruption, from the hills of the Cote Gelée to the Opelousa mountains, and of a vast prairie, sprinkled here and there with palmetto fields, clumps of trees, and broad patches of brushwood, which appeared mere dark specks on the immense extent of plain that lay before us, covered with grass of the brightest green, and so long as to reach up to our horses' shoulders. To the right was a plantation of palmettos, half a mile wide, and bounded by a sort of creek or gully, the banks of which were covered with gigantic cypress trees. Beyond this, more prairie and a wood of evergreen oak. To the east, an impenetrable thicket of magnolias, papaws, oak and bean trees—to the north, the pine wood before mentioned.

Such was the rich landscape we had been surrounded by a short hour before. But now, on looking around, we found the scene changed; and our horizon became far more limited by rising clouds of bluish gray vapour, which approached us rapidly from the wind quarter.

The air was so hot and parching, that our horses' coats, which a short time previously had been dripping with sweat, were now perfectly dry, and the hair plastered upon them; the animals' tongues hung out of their mouths, and they seemed panting for cooler air. "Look yonder!" cried Carleton, and he pointed to the line of the horizon, which had hitherto been of gray, lead-coloured vapour. It was now becoming reddish in the south-west quarter, and the vapour had taken the appearance of smoke. At the same time we heard a sort of distant crackling, like a heavy running-fire of musketry, and which was repeated at short intervals. Each time it was heard, our horses appeared scared and trembling.

The creek was getting rapidly wider, and the ground so swampy that it was impossible to proceed further. Seeing this, we agreed to return to the prairie, and to try if it were not cooler among the palmettos. But when we came to the

place where we had crossed the creek, our horses refused to take the leap again, and it was with the greatest difficulty we at length forced them over. All this time the redness in the horizon was getting brighter, and the atmosphere hotter and drier; the smoke had spread itself over prairie, forest, and plantations. We continued retracing our steps, as well as we could, to the spot where we had halted. "See there," said Carleton; "not half an hour ago those reeds were as fresh and green as if they had just sprung out of the earth, and now look at them—the leaves are hanging down, parched and curled up by the heat."

The whole prairie, the whole horizon to the south-west, was now one mass of dense smoke, through which the sun's disc looked scarcely brighter than a paper lantern. Behind the thick curtain which thus concealed everything from our view, we heard a low hissing like that of a multitude of snakes. The smoke was stifling and unbearable; our horses again turned panting round, and tore madly towards the creek. On reaching it we dismounted, but had the greatest difficulty to prevent them from leaping into the water. The streaks of red to our right became brighter and brighter, and gleamed through the huge dark trunks of the cypress trees. The crackling and hissing grew louder than ever. Suddenly the frightful truth flashed upon us, and at the very same moment Carleton and I exclaimed, "The prairie is on fire!"

As we uttered the words, there was a loud rustling behind us, and a herd of deer broke headlong through a thicket of tall reeds and bulrushes, and dashed up to their necks into the water. There they remained, not fifty paces from us, little more than their heads above the surface, gazing at us, as though imploring our help and compassion. We fancied we could see tears in the poor beasts' eyes.

We looked behind us. On came the pillars of flame, flickering and threatening through the smoke, licking up all before them; and, at times, a gust of so hot and blasting a wind as seemed to dry the very marrow in our bones. The roaring of the fire was now distinctly audible, mingled with hissing, whistling sounds, and cracking noises, as of mighty trees falling. Suddenly a bright flame shot up through the stifling smoke, and immediately afterwards a sea of fire burst upon our aching eyeballs. The whole palmetto field was in flames.

The heat was so great, that we every moment expected to see our clothes take fire. Our horses dragged us still nearer

to the creek, sprang into the water, and drew us down the bank after them. Another rustling and noise in the thicket of reeds. A she bear, with her cubs at her heels, came towards us; and, at the same time, a second herd of deer rushed into the water not twenty yards from where we were standing. We pointed our guns at the bears; they moved off towards the deer, who remained undisturbed at their approach; and there they stood, bears and deer, not five paces apart, but taking no more notice of each other than if they had been animals of the same species. Most beasts now came flocking to the river. Deer, wolves, foxes, horses—all came in crowds to seek shelter in one element from the fury of another. Most of them, however, went further up the creek, where it took a north-easterly direction, and widened into a sort of lake. Those that had first arrived began to follow the new comers, and we did the same.

Suddenly the baying of hounds was heard. "Hurra! these are dogs; men must be near." A volley from a dozen rifles was the answer to our explanation. The shots were fired not two hundred yards from us, yet we saw nothing of the persons who fired them. The wild beasts around us trembled and crouched before this new danger, but did not attempt to move a step. We ourselves were standing in the midst of them up to our waists in water. "Who goes there?" we shouted. Another volley, and this time not one hundred yards off. We saw the flashes of the pieces, and heard voices talking in a dialect compounded of French and Indian. We perceived that we had to do with Acadians. A third volley, and the bullets whistled about our ears. It was getting past a joke. "Halt!" shouted we, "stop firing till you see what you are firing at." There was a dead silence for a moment, then a burst of savage laughter. "Fire! fire!" cried two or three voices.

"If you fire," cried I, "look out for yourselves, for we shall do the same. Have a care what you are about."

"Morbleu! Sacre!" roared half a score of voices.

"Who is that who dares to give us orders? Fire on the dogs!"

"If you do, we return it."

"Sacre!" screamed the savages. "They are gentlemen from the towns. Their speech betrays them. Shoot them—the dogs, the spies! What do they want in the prairie?"

"Your blood be on your own heads," cried I. And, with the feelings of desperate men, we levelled our guns in the

direction in which we had seen the flashes of the last volley. At that moment—"Halt! What is here?" shouted a stentorian voice close to us.

"Stop firing, or you are dead men," cried five or six other voices.

"*Sacre! ce sont des Americains,*" muttered the Acadians.

"Monsieur Carleton!" cried a voice.

"Here!" replied my friend. A boat shot out of the smoke, between us and our antagonists. Carleton's servant was in it. The next moment we were surrounded by a score of Acadians and half a dozen Americans.

It appeared that the Acadians, so soon as they perceived the prairie to be on fire, had got into a boat and descended a creek that flowed into the Chicot creek, on which we now were. The beasts of the forest and prairie, flying to the water, found themselves inclosed in the angle formed by the two creeks, and their retreat being cut off by the fire, they fell an easy prey to the Acadians, wild half-savage fellows, who slaughtered them in a profusion and with a brutality that excited our disgust, a feeling which the Americans seemed to share.

"Well, stranger!" said one of the latter, an old man, to Carleton, "do you go with them Acadians, or come with us?"

"Who are you, my friends?"

"Friends!" repeated the Yankee, shaking his head, "your friendships are soon made. Friends, indeed! We ain't that yet; but if you be minded to come with us, well and good."

"I met these American gentlemen," now put in Martin, "and when they heard that you had lost your way, and were out of provisions, they were so good as to come and seek you."

"You be'n't much used to the prairie, I reckon?" observed the American who had spoken before.

"No, indeed, my friend," said I.

"I told you a'ready," replied the man with some degree of pride, "we ain't your friends; but if you choose to accept American hospitality, you're welcome."

We glanced at the Acadians, who were still firing, and dragging the beasts they slaughtered into their boat and to the shore. They appeared perfect savages, and there was little temptation to seek guidance or assistance at their hands.

"If it is agreeable to you, we will accompany you," said I to the American, making a step towards the boat. We were

eager to be off, for the heat and smoke were unbearable. The Yankee answered neither yes nor no. His attention seemed taken up by the proceedings of the Acadians.

"They're worse than Injuns," said he to a young man standing by him. "They shoot more in an hour than they could eat in a year, in their tarnation French wastefulness."

"I've a notion o' makin' 'em leave off," replied the young man.

"The country's theirs, or their masters' at least," rejoined the other. "I reckon it's no business of ours."

This dialogue was carried on with the greatest possible degree of drawling deliberation, and under circumstances in which, certainly, none but a Yankee would have thought of wasting time in words. A prairie twenty miles long and ten broad, and a couple of miles of palmetto ground, all in a blaze—the flames drawing nearer every minute, and having, in some places, already reached up to the shores of the creek. On the other side a couple of dozen wild Acadians firing right and left, without paying the least attention where or whom their bullets struck. Carleton and myself, up to our waists in water, and the Americans chattering together as unconcernedly as if they had been sitting under the roofs of their own blockhouses.

"Do you live far from here?" said I at last to the Yankee, rather impatiently.

"Not so far as I sometimes wish," answered he, with a contemptuous glance at the Acadians; "but far enough to get you an appetite for your supper, if you ain't got one already." And taking a thin roll of tobacco out of his pocket, he bit off a piece of it, laid his hands upon the muzzle of his rifle, lent his chin upon his hands, and seemed to have forgotten all about us.

This apathy became intolerable to men in our situation.

"My good man," said I, "will you put your hospitable offer into execution, and take——"

I could not continue, for I was literally suffocated with the heat and smoke. The very water of the creek was getting warm.

"I've a notion," said the Yankee, with his usual drawl, and apparently only just perceiving our distress, "I've a notion we had better be movin' out o' the way o' the fire. Now, strangers, in with you." And he helped Carleton and myself into the boat, where we lay down, and became insensible from heat and exhaustion.

When we recovered our senses, we found ourselves in the bottom of the boat, and the old Yankee standing by us with a bottle of whiskey in his hand, which he invited us to take. We felt better for the cordial, and began to look around us.

Before us lay an apparently interminable cypress swamp—behind us a sheet of water, formed by the junction of the two creeks, and at present overhung by a mass of smoke that concealed the horizon from our view. From time to time there was a burst of flame that lit up the swamp, and caused the cypress trees to appear as if they grew out of a sea of fire.

“Come,” said the old Yankee, “we must go on. It is near sunset, and we have far to go.”

“And which way does our road lie?” I asked.

“Across the cypress swamp, unless you’d rather go around it.”

“The shortest road is the best,” said Carleton.

“The shortest road is the best!” repeated the Yankee contemptuously, and turning to his companions. “Spoken like a Britisher. Well, he shall have his own way, and the more so as I believe it to be as good a one as the other. James,” added he, turning to one of the men, “you go farther down, through the Snapping Turtle swamp; we will cross here.”

“And our horses?” said I.

“They are grazing in the rushes. They’ll be took care of. We shall have rain to-night, and to-morrow they may come round without singeing a hoof.”

I had found myself once or twice upon the borders of the swamp that now lay before us, but had always considered it impenetrable, and I did not understand, as I gazed into its gloomy depths, how we could possibly cross it.

“Is there any beaten path or road through the swamp?” inquired I of the old man.

“Path or road! Do you take it for a gentleman’s park? There’s the path that natur’ has made.” And he sprang upon the trunk of a tree covered with moss and creepers, which rose out of the vast depth of mud that formed the swamp.

“*Here’s* the path,” said he.

“Then we will wait and come round with our horses,” I replied. “Where shall we find them?”

“As you please, stranger. *We* shall cross the swamp. Only, if you can’t do like your horses, and sup off bulrushes, you are likely to fast for the next twenty-four hours.”

"And why so? There is game and wild-fowl for the shooting."

"No doubt there is, if you can eat them raw like the Injuns. Where will you find, within two miles round, a square foot of dry land to make your fire on?"

To say the truth, we did not altogether like the company we had fallen amongst. These Yankee squatters bore in general but an indifferent character. They were said to fear neither God nor man, to trust entirely to their axe and their rifle, and to be little scrupulous in questions of property; in short, to be scarce less wild and dangerous than the Indians themselves.

The Yankee who had hitherto acted as spokesman, and who seemed to be in some way or other the chief of the party, was a man apparently near sixty years of age, upwards of six feet high, thin in person, but with such bone and muscle as indicated great strength in the possessor. His features were keen and sharp; his eyes like a falcon's; his bearing and manners bespoke an exalted opinion of himself, and (at least as far as we were concerned) a tolerable degree of contempt for others. His dress consisted of a jacket of skins, secured round the waist by a girdle, in which was stuck a long knife; leather breeches, a straw hat without a brim, and mocassins. His companion was similarly accoutred.

"Where is Martin?" cried Carleton.

"Do you mean the Acadian lad who brought us to you?"

"The same."

The Yankee pointed towards the smoke. "Yonder, no doubt, with his countrymen; but I reckon their infernal hunt is over. I hear no more shots."

"I've a notion," said one of the younger men, "the stranger don't rightly know what he wants. Your horses are grazing half a mile off. You would not have had us make the poor beasts swim through the creek tied to the stern of the boat? 'Lijab is with them."

"And what will he do with them?"

"Joel is going back with the boat, and when the fire is out he will bring them round," said the elder Yankee. "You don't suppose—?" added he—He left the sentence unfinished, but a smile of scornful meaning flitted over his features.

I looked at Carleton. He nodded. "We *will* go with you," said I, "and trust entirely to your guidance."

"You do well," was the brief reply. "Joel," added he

turning to one of the young men, "where are the torches? We shall want them?"

"Torches!" exclaimed I.

The Yankee gave me a look, as much as to say—You must meddle with everything. "Yes," replied he; "and if you had ten lives, it would be as much as they are all worth to enter this swamp without torches." So saying he struck fire, and selecting a couple of pine splinters from several lying in the boat, he lighted them, doing everything with such extraordinary deliberation, and so oddly, that in spite of our unpleasant situation we could scarce help laughing. Meantime the boat pushed off with two men in it, leaving Carleton, myself, the old man, and another American, standing at the edge of the swamp.

"Follow me, step by step, and as if you were treading on eggs," said our leader; "and you, Jonathan, have an eye to the strangers, and don't wait till they are up to their necks in the mud to pick them out of it."

We did not feel much comforted by this speech; but mustering all our courage, we strode on after our plain-spoken guide.

We had proceeded but a very short distance into the swamp before we found out the use of the torches. The huge trunks of the cypress trees, which stood four or five yards asunder, shot up to the height of fifty feet, entirely free from branches, which then, however, spread out at right angles to the stem, making the trees appear like gigantic umbrellas, and covering the whole morass with an impenetrable roof, through which not even a sunbeam could find a passage. On looking behind us, we saw the daylight, at the entrance of the swamp, as at the mouth of a vast cavern. The farther we went the thicker became the air; and at last the effluvia were so stifling and pestilential, that the torches burnt pale and dim, and more than once threatened to go out.

"Yes, yes," muttered our guide to himself, "a night passed in this swamp would leave a man ague-struck for the rest of his days. A night—ay, an hour would do it, if your pores were ever so little open; but now there's no danger; the prairie fire's good for that, dries the sweat and closes the pores."

He went on conversing thus with himself, but still striding forward, throwing his torch-light on each log or tree trunk, and trying its solidity with his foot before he trusted

his weight upon it—doing all this with a dexterity and speed that proved his familiarity with these dangerous paths.

“Keep close to me,” said he to us, “but make yourselves light—as light at least as Britishers can make themselves. Hold your breath, and——ha! what is that log? Hollo, Nathan,” continued he to himself, “what comes to you, man? Dont you know a sixteen-foot alligator from a tree?”

He had stretched out his foot, but fortunately, before setting it down, he poked what he took for a log with the butt of his gun. The supposed block of wood gave way a little, and the old squatter, throwing himself back, was within an ace of pushing me into the swamp.

“Ah, friend!” said he, not in the least disconcerted, “you thought to sacumvent honest folk with your devilry and cunning.”

“What is the matter?” asked I.

“Not much the matter,” he replied, drawing his knife from its sheath. “Only an alligator: there it is again.”

And in the place of the log, which had disappeared, the jaws of a huge alligator gaped before us. I raised my gun to my shoulder. The Yankee seized my arm.

“Don’t fire,” whispered he. “Don’t fire, so long as you can help it. We aint alone here. This will do as well,” he added as he stooped down, and drove his long knife into the alligator’s eye. The monster gave a frightful howl, and lashed violently with its tail, besprinkling us with the black slimy mud of the swamp.

“Take that!” said the squatter with a grim smile, “and that, and that!” stabbing the brute repeatedly between the neck and the ribs, while it writhed and snapped furiously at him. Then wiping his knife, he stuck it in his belt, and looked keenly and cautiously around him.

“I’ve a notion there must be a tree trunk hereaway; it ain’t the first time I’ve followed this track. There it is, but a good six foot off.” And so saying he gave a spring, and alighted in safety on the stepping-place.

“Have a care, man,” cried I. “There is water there. I see it glitter.”

“Pho, water! What you call water is snakes. Come on.”

I hesitated, and a shudder came over me. The leap, as regarded distance, was a trifling one, but it was over an almost bottomless chasm, full of the foulest mud, on which the mocassin snakes, the deadliest of the American reptiles, were swarming.

“Come on!”

Necessity lent me strength, and, pressing my left foot firmly against the log on which I was standing, and which was each moment sinking with our weight deeper into the soft slimy ground, I sprang across. Carleton followed me.

“Well done!” cried the old man. “Courage, and a couple more such leaps, and we shall be getting over the worst of it.”

We pushed on, steadily but slowly, never setting our foot on a log till we had ascertained its solidity with the butts of our guns. The cypress swamp extended four or five miles along the shores of the creek; it was a deep lake of black mud, covered over and disguised by a deceitful bright green veil of creeping plants and mosses, which had spread themselves in their rank luxuriance over its whole surface, and over the branches and trunks of trees scattered about the swamp. These latter were not placed with any very great regularity, but had been evidently arranged by the hand of man.

“There seems to have been a sort of path made here,” said I to our guide, “for,”——

“Silence!” interrupted he, in a low tone; “silence for your life, till we are on firm ground again. Don’t mind the snakes,” added he, as the torch-light revealed some enormous ones lying coiled up on the moss and lianas close to us. “Follow me closely.”

But just as I stretched forward my foot and was about to place it in the very print that his had left, the hideous jaw of an alligator was suddenly stretched over the tree trunk, not six inches from my leg, and the creature snapped at me so suddenly, that I had just time to fire my gun into his glittering lizard-like eye. The monster bounded back, uttered a sound between a bellow and a groan, and, striking wildly about him in the morass, disappeared.

The American looked round when I fired, and an approving smile played about his mouth as he said something to me which I did not hear, owing to the infernal uproar that now arose on all sides of us, and at first completely deafened me.

Thousands, tens of thousands, of birds and reptiles, alligators, enormous bull-frogs, night-owls, ahingas, herons, whose dwellings were in the mud of the swamp, or on its leafy roof, now lifted up their voices, bellowing, hooting, shrieking, and groaning. Bursting forth from the obscene retreat in which they had hitherto lain hidden, the alligators raised their

hideous snouts out of the green coating of the swamp, gnashing their teeth and straining towards us, while the owls and other birds circled round our heads flapping and striking us with their wings as they passed. We drew our knives, and endeavoured to defend at least our heads and eyes; but all was in vain against the myriads of enemies that surrounded us; and the unequal combat could not possibly have lasted long, when suddenly a shot was fired, followed immediately by another. The effect they produced was magical. The growls and cries of rage and fury were exchanged for howls of fear and complaint; the alligators withdrew gradually into their native mud; the birds flew in wider circles around us; the unclean multitudes were in full retreat. By degrees the various noises died away. But our torches had gone out, and all around us was black as pitch.

"In God's name, are you there, old man?" asked I.

"What! still alive?" he replied, with a laugh that jarred unpleasantly upon my nerves, "and the other Britisher too? I told ye we were not alone. These brutes defend themselves if you attack them upon their own ground, and a single shot is sufficient to bring them about one's ears. But when they see you're in earnest, they soon get tired of it, and a couple more shots sent among them generally drive them away again; for they are but senseless squealin' creatures after all."

While the old man was speaking he struck fire and lit one of the torches.

"Luckily we have rather better footing here," continued he. "And, now, forward quickly; for the sun is set, and we have still some way to go."

And again he led the march, with a skill and confidence in himself which each moment increased our reliance on him. After proceeding in this manner for about half an hour, we saw a pale light glimmering in the distance.

"Five minutes more and your troubles are over; but now is the time to be cautious, for it is on the borders of these cursed swamps the alligators best love to lie."

In my eagerness to find myself once more on dry land, I scarcely heard the Yankee's words; and as the stepping-places were now near together, I hastened on, and got a little in front of the party. Suddenly I felt a log on which I had just placed my foot, give way under me. I had scarcely time to call out "Halt!" when I was up to the armpits in the swamp, with every prospect of sinking still deeper.

"You *will* hurry on," said the old man, with a laugh; and at the same time, springing forward, he caught me by the hair. "Take warning for the future," added he, as he helped me out of the mud; "and look there!"

I did look, and saw half a dozen alligators writhing and crawling in the noxious slime within a few feet of us. I felt a sickening sensation, and for a moment I could not utter a word; the Yankee produced his whiskey flask.

"Take a swallow of this," said he; "but no, better wait till we are out of the swamp. Stop a little till your heart beats quieter. So, you are better now. When you've made two or three such journeys with old Nathan, you'll be quite another man. Now,—forward again."

A few minutes later we were out of the swamp, and looking over a field of palmettos that waved and rustled in the moonbeams. The air was fresh, and once more we breathed freely.

"Now then," said our guide, "a dram, and then in half an hour we are at the Salt Lick."

"Where?" asked I.

"At the Salt Lick, to shoot a deer or two for supper. Hallo! what is that?"

"A thunderclap."

"A thunderclap! You have heard but few of them in Louisiana, I guess, or you would know the difference betwixt thunder and the crack of a back-woodsman's rifle. To be sure, yonder oak wood has an almighty echo. That's James's rifle—he has shot a stag. There's another shot."

This time it was evidently a rifle shot, but re-echoed like thunder from the depths of the immense forest.

"We must let them know that we're still in whole skins, and not in the maw of an alligator," said the old man, who had been loading his rifle, and now fired it off.

In half an hour we were at the Salt Lick, where we found our guide's two sons busy disembowelling and cutting up a fine buck they had just killed, an occupation in which they were so engrossed that they scarce seemed to notice our arrival. We sat down, not a little glad to repose after the fatigues and dangers we had gone through. When hind and fore quarters, breast and back, were all divided in right huntsmanlike style, the young men looked at their father. "Will you take a bite and sup here?" said the latter, addressing Carleton and myself, "or will you wait till we get home?"

"How far is there still to go?"

"How far? With a good trotting horse, and a better road, three quarters of an hour would bring you there. You may reckon it a couple of hours."

"Then we would prefer eating something here."

"As you will."

Without more words, or loss of time, a haunch was cut off one of the hind quarters; dry leaves and branches were collected; and in one minute a fire was blazing brightly, the joint turning before it on a wooden spit. In half an hour the party was collected round a roast haunch of venison, which, although eaten without bread or any of the usual condiments, certainly appeared to us to be the very best we had ever tasted.

XII.

A PIC-NIC AT THE SEA-SHORE.

"The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy."—*Goldsmith*.

THE Americans are certainly a gregarious people. What else but an inherent propensity can excite that passion for congregating *en masse*, which seems to pervade all classes of my countrymen whenever the almost tropical heats of our summers make nothing more desirable than to have "ample room and verge enough"?

As soon as the thermometer begins to range between 80° and 100°, the whole population becomes possessed with the idea that there is no breathing except in the atmosphere of a dense crowd; and away they all go in stages, crammed to the utmost that the law allows, and in steamboats noted for never carrying less than four hundred passengers, to enjoy the delights of hotels and boarding-houses filled to overflowing, at places celebrated for mineral springs or sea-bathing.

I decided, at an early age, that springs were not to my taste. I had never been in any need of the benefits supposed to be derived from drinking chalybeate waters; and I thought there was nothing, at those places, sufficiently interesting or amusing to atone for the discomforts of small close sleeping-rooms, crowded tables, and the necessity of appearing always in grand costume: the last grievance no

trifling one in warm weather, or indeed in any weather at all. But I wavered some time before I settled into the same opinion with regard to the sea-shore locations, all of which have a redeeming quality in the grandeur of the vast and magnificent ocean, with all its associations and accompaniments.

Still, the stories I heard every summer of the overflow of company, and the consequent inconveniences at the fashionable bathing-places, frightened from me all inclination to participate in the inflictions necessary to be borne by the sufferers that compose these crowds; particularly when I was told that many, on arriving at night, could not on any terms procure either beds or bed-chambers: that gentlemen had been glad to sleep in their gigs, or on the dining-room table; that ladies had been obliged to sit up all night in their travelling dresses, for want of a spot to lie down in; and that, after dusk, there was generally a prowling through the rooms for the purpose of purloining pillows, the thieves being those unfortunate fair ones who, in the general scramble, had been able to obtain only bolsters to their beds; and that next evening the stolen pillows were stolen over again by the "last arrivals."

At length an opportunity offered of visiting the sea-shore in a private and retired way, meeting there only a select party (all of whom were people of no pretensions), and which I thought would suit me exactly. I was spending the summer at the house of a married friend (also a lady of no pretensions) in the eastern section of the State of New Jersey.

Our destination was to a part of the coast about twenty-five miles from the residence of the family with which I was staying, and as yet (but this was many years since) it could boast of neither hotel nor boarding-house. However, it had long been in great vogue as a place of annual pic-nic parties for the sons and daughters of New Jersey—a State which, though near two centuries old, has almost as few pretensions as any one in the Union: it being, as Dr Franklin quaintly remarked, very much like a cider barrel tapped at both ends—all the good of the western part running into Pennsylvania, and all that of the eastern division being drained off by New York.

But it is time to get fairly under-way with my narrative: I was then invited by the friends, in whose house I was a guest, to join a pic-nic party to the sea-shore. There was to be no ceremony, no form, no dressing; all the company were

acquainted with each other ; none were fashionable ; and we were to meet only for the purpose of enjoyment. Each family was to furnish a share of the provisions ; and each, like boarding-school children, were to find their own bedding and towels.

Each division was to set out from its own home, and in its own conveyance. The starting-points were very far apart, but the goal was a house at Squan,* well known to my Jersey friends as one in which shore-parties were accommodated with everything but bed and board. I understood also that the attendance of domestics was not in the bond ; for how could the proprietors of this mansion be expected to furnish servants for others, when they never could get any for themselves ? All this was at least novel ; I was very young at the time, and thought it would be delightful.

We were to rise with the sun to commence our journey ; and as—like Nelson—I always make a point of being too early, *I* rose with the morning star. But this was a work of supererogation, as I have often found it in similar cases ; for though every one was busy preparing, no one seemed to get prepared, except myself, who was ready bonneted, with my trunk in the porch, for upwards of four hours ; and it was not till nine o'clock that we *started*, as we say in America. When a journey is about to commence, why are people that live in the country so much more difficult to be started than people that live in town ?

We rode in the sort of carriage best adapted to our State (that is, the State of New Jersey), as it is a vehicle which goes over the sandy roads with almost the velocity of a sleigh ; and originating in this part of the Union, it has always been denominated a Jersey waggon. It is square-bodied, flat-roofed, olive-coloured, and furnished with three seats, including the one for the driver, who is generally the owner also. These carriages would be well enough only for one fault, which is that they have no springs ; and therefore the passengers are “ smartly exercised ” by the prevailing fashion of driving at a brisk trot, whenever the heaviness of the sand does not compel the horses to a slow creep—this last was our pace on the road to Squan. Behind us followed, at a still slower gait,

* I believe that *Squam* is the newest reading, but at the period I allude to, the word certainly terminated with an *n*. The geographers of posterity will doubtless be at great pains to settle the true version, and to their research I commit it. For myself, I shall adhere to *Squan*, as being the most familiar to me.

a true *bonâ-fide* waggon of vast strength and dimensions, conducted by two hired men (something like what in Europe are called *servants*), and loaded with baggage. This baggage consisted of trunks of apparel, boxes containing plates, dishes, knives, forks, &c. ; baskets of cold provisions (for there had been extensive cooking the day before) ; mattresses, bolsters, pillows, and other bedding ; guns and fishing-tackle ; and, in short, everything that was judged *indispensably* necessary for our convenience, during the few days that we were to sojourn at a place where nothing was to be had. The inmates of the carriage, as by courtesy we called it, were my friend and her baby, her niece and myself, and an Irish girl in the capacity of child's-maid. The gentleman sat on the front seat and drove.

The delights of our ride were not great. It was all the way through pine woods that seemed interminable, and through sand that seemed unfathomable. We saw no house, not even the cabin of a hunter, though these forests abound in wild animals. There was some relief to the monotony of the scene when we came to the traces of a recent conflagration, such as often rages in the wilderness for several days successively. We recognized its course by the large open spaces (covered with coals and ashes) that it had made in the depths of the forest ; and by the remains of blackened and half-burnt trees, with many of their trunks still standing erect amidst heaps of charred and fallen branches. And once we passed by a deep narrow valley or bottom, which had some years before been overflowed by a freshet from a neighbouring creek. The water, lodging in this ravine a long time ere it entirely subsided, had killed all the trees, which, stripped of their bark and foliage, interlaced their naked branches, and looked like an army of gigantic white skeletons.

The road was scarcely more than a path through the woods ; and the boughs meeting across, and protruding into the carriage, frequently saluted us with a blow on the head (much to the discomfiture of our bonnets), and covered us with a shower of leaves and twigs, as we forced our way through them. Everything looked so wild and lonely that I could almost have fancied myself a thousand miles from the haunts of civilized man. We stopped once to feed the horses with some of the provender brought in the *big waggon*, and to water them at a little brook, and to refresh ourselves from one of the baskets. We then pursued our toilsome way, the sand becoming deeper and the pines more impervious. The melan-

choly sighing of these gloomy trees, as the breeze agitates their lofty branches, resembles no other sound that I have ever heard.

The heat had now become almost intolerable ; our hands were kept in perpetual motion, trying in vain to defend ourselves from the musquitoes that swarmed in the dark recesses of these sandy forests ; the baby cried (as well it might), and we all gradually ceased to talk.

Indeed, talking had been forced work for the last three hours.

Like Lord Lovel in the song, " We rode, and we rode, and we rode our road." But still we saw nothing of a certain wooden bridge that the explorers of these wilds designated as a land-mark, and which was to prove that we had accomplished half our journey. And then it would, of course, afford us great happiness to know that, in all probability, we should have no more than the same quantity of uncomfatableness to go through, before we entered upon the pleasures of Squan ; like the poor bound boy, who, on being asked why he was always wishing for June, replied, " Because, from the thirtieth of next June, I shall have but nine more years to serve."

At length we saw the waters of the creek shining through some distant trees, and we hailed with delight the first glimpse of the bridge. But when we approached, we found it broken down, so as to form a most picturesque ruin, but totally impassable for man or horse, much less for waggons. At this sight the two hired men were outrageous, and declared the supervisor ought to be fined for allowing the bridge to remain in such a condition. " Is it possible," thought I, " that these wild regions can have a supervisor, or anything that savours of the inhabited world ! "

To cross the creek here was impossible, as, though not wide, it was deep and dangerous ; and the only alternative was to make a circuit round, to a place where it was said to be shallow and easily forded. But we took too wide a range in our circuit, so that we never came to any more of the creek ; and, in fact, went so far out of our way that we were completely bewildered ; and my friend began to tell stories of the bones of lost travellers having been frequently discovered in the depths of these gloomy forests.

We had now been riding five hours, during all which time we had not seen a house. At last, that welcome spectacle saluted our eyes in the midst of a small clearing ; and the men recognized it as the town of Squankum.

Squankum was a new frame house, the boards and shingles still fresh in unsullied whitish, or rather yellowishness, and the window-sashes as yet unfurnished with panes ; though I have no doubt many of them were glazed before the ensuing winter. The house had as yet no sign, but in one of the front windows was a lemon sitting on the bottom of an inverted tumbler, with a bottle of liquor standing by it. Therefore we knew the edifice to be a tavern.

At the sound of our wheels the landlady ran out to the door, with children before, behind, and on each side of her, most of the juveniles having their hands and mouths full of gingerbread ; but they all absconded on finding that we were going to stop. We gladly alighted, and our men unharnessed the horses, assisted by an old negro whom we found sleeping on the cellar-door, enjoying the refreshing beams of the meridian sun. We walked up a sloping plank which was placed at the door as a substitute for steps, and entered the sitting-room, the floor of which was slippery with sand, and the walls black with flies ; the furniture consisting of six tall, narrow-bottomed, yellow chairs, and a pine table painted red. One of the windows had the sash propped up with a broken shovel, the other with the mush-stick.

After awhile the landlady made her appearance in a clean cap, and handkerchief stiff-starched and highly blued, and a short-waisted, narrow-skirted gown of dusty black bombazet, with long tight sleeves very small at the shoulders. She brought in her hand a coarse muslin shirt, at which she began to sew most vehemently as soon as she took her seat. She informed us that her husband was a squire, and that he had gone to court,—meaning the county court-house.

On being asked if we could have dinner while the horses rested, she replied that “she reckoned we could.” And forthwith she called in her eldest daughter, a tall, dangling girl of fourteen, with long thin arms and very long straw-coloured hair. This girl the mother denominated “You Famey,” meaning Euphemia, and ordered her to “go up chamber and put on a clean apron, and then set table and get victuals.”

When victuals came, our hostess (who thought it good manners to remain with us for company) was still busily and silently engaged at her sewing ; but she invited us to “sit by and reach to,” which signified to go to the table and help ourselves. The family of course had dined at twelve o’clock, the usual hour for country people. It being now near three in

the afternoon, our repast was evidently intended as a melange of dinner and supper, and consisted of the weakest of tea in a japanned tea-pot, and the coarsest of brown sugar in a flowered glass tumbler; a quantity of thick hard cider in a pitcher, whose ornamental device was a frightful portrait of Washington; a plate piled with sour, heavy rye-bread, which might almost have been mistaken for the pieces of iron ore that are frequently found on the surface of the earth in the pine forests of Monmouth county; a fowl, split and broiled, looking like a small spread-eagle, and which Famey had hunted down and killed after our arrival; a square of cold salt pork; an enormous species of sausage called a Tom Thumb; a plate of coarse, hard gingerbread, and another of huge pickled cucumbers nearly a foot long.

It was evident that at this early period, a taste for luxuries had not yet found its way into the town of Squankum, which I have no doubt, however, is now a city, according to the usual time requisite for the growth of cities in the republican section of the North American continent.

During our repast we were objects of great curiosity to seven children with white hair and dark brown faces, all of whom hung painfully on the window-sills with their heads in and their legs out, for the purpose of surveying us at their ease. One mischievous rogue jumped down silyly, and catching his little brother by the feet, tilted him up and pitched him, head-foremost, through the window into the room, and then ran away half laughing, half frightened. The child screamed, his sister Famey—who was waiting on table—took him up and washed the bump on his forehead with vinegar from the pickle-dish; and the mother, laying down her sewing, ran out, and breaking a thick switch from a newly felled tree, set off into the woods in quest of the offender. However, she soon returned from her fruitless pursuit, very much out of breath, and declaring that “she might as well sarch for a needle in a haystack as for Joss when he took to the woods, and that she did not expect to see no more of him till daddy came home, who, instead of whooping him as he desarved, would only egg him on to further mischief; and that poor little Madison had not the peace of a dog with him.”

After this outbreak, the landlady resumed her work, and said no more, till, hearing that we were bound to Squan, she informed us that we had gone nine miles out of our road.

When dinner was over, we proceeded on our journey, and the afternoon passed on much in the same way as the morn-

ing. Towards evening we felt the freshness of the sea-air as we approached the shore; and finally we got out of the pines, and into a flat open country bounded by the ocean. We saw three or four houses that seemed several miles apart, and at length we came to the one that was to terminate our journey. Like all the others, it was of wood, and might have been called a farm-house, only that nothing worthy the name of farming could be effected on a soil so sandy and barren. We found, however, that the attempt was made every year, but always with little or no success.

This domicile belonged to an old man and his wife, who were now its sole inhabitants, their children having long since married, and gone from them. Their wants were few, and they helped themselves along, as their neighbours did, by letting their house, during the summer season, to successive shore-parties. Where the proprietors slept and ate during the sojourn of their lodgers, was then, and still is, a mystery to me,—as every nook and corner of the house was filled, and more than filled, by the strangers and their appurtenances. I have a strong suspicion that the old couple must have “camped out.”

All the party, except ourselves, had arrived the day before. We found eight pairs of married people; one couple, to our great annoyance, being a bride and bridegroom. The only young girls were my friend's niece and myself; but as there were no beaux, we made no attempt at being belles.

When we arrived the husbands had not yet returned from fishing and shooting; but all the wives came out to welcome us, each in a similar costume of dark gingham gowns and plain muslin collars; their hair parted smoothly on their foreheads, and tucked behind their ears with side-combs. Most of them looked like what are called *amiable* women, that is, women of few words and fewer thoughts; and all of them were knitting. I afterwards understood that when single they had all been romps.

As the sleeping accommodations were known to be on a very limited scale, none of the ladies, except my friend, had brought with them a female servant. But as they were all notable (an honourable characteristic of the Jersey women), they had made arrangements for executing with their own hands whatever work was necessary. Therefore, soon after our arrival, they all put on long bib-aprons of check, and forming themselves into two divisions, some set the table while the others prepared supper.

Like ourselves, each family had contributed to the general stock of provisions, by bringing in their waggons a supply of cold eatables, such as hams, sausages, pies, cheese, biscuit, bread, tea, coffee, sugar, wine, &c. ; depending for variety on the success of the shooters and fishers.

In a short time the report of fire-arms was heard, and announced the approach of the husbands, discharging their guns before they entered the house, for fear of accidents. They were all good clever men. They brought home a few birds, and a great quantity of crabs, which were speedily cooked by their wives. This is not a very pleasant business at any time, but least of all in a warm evening in July.

At supper, the gentlemen talked of their sport, and the ladies of nothing, except the bride, who had been crying all day at the absence of her husband, and now that he had come home, she received him with reproaches for having left her so long, and tried to make him say that he had passed the day as miserably as herself. But when he, a little perversely, persisted in saying that to him it had been pleasant enough, she burst into tears, and sobbed out, "Oh! William, you don't love me!"

After supper, it was judged inexpedient to keep the candles burning, lest they should attract the musquitoes. Only very good talkers can talk well in the dark, and few of our party had much fluency even in broad daylight; and as we were all fatigued, and there was no more to be done, and nothing more to be said, it was moved by the senior wife that the ladies should retire to their rooms to give the gentlemen an opportunity of spreading their mattresses on the parlour-floor, that being their allotted sleeping-place, as there were only two chambers in the house. So we took lights and proceeded up-stairs.

I had been trying many times during the day to persuade myself that I was in a state of great felicity, and that everything was pleasant and agreeable; but all my sophistry fell to the ground as soon as I saw our dormitory. There were two bedsteads jammed together, foot to foot, in a room so small that there was barely space to get in and out. There was not a spot for a table, chair, washing-stand, or even for a trunk; all the washing and dressing having to be performed in the passage between the rooms. The heat of our cell was intense. There was only one window (a small one, containing but four panes), and it seemed to have been made not to open, and was found immovable. In these two beds seven

persons deposited themselves. The other young lady and two of the wives occupied one; I had a place in the second with my married friend and her baby: and direful to relate! we were obliged to admit the servant-girl as the seventh occupant, there being no other way of bestowing her. Necessity has no law: and she stretched, or rather contracted herself, in what space was left for her on the lower part of both beds, her head on one and her feet on the other. What a night! We were feyered with heat: suffocated for want of air: stung with musquitoes till our faces and necks were as full of lumps as the surface of a squash: the baby cried, and the maid complained frequently of being kicked in the face; no wonder when we were all tossing about the whole night. I longed to camp out.

At length, "wished morning came;" and we were all to rise as soon as the sun was up, particularly as the said sun beamed most fiercely into our uncurtained window, directly upon the beds. The Irish girl had by her lady's order taken up the wide-awake baby at the first glimpse of dawn, and was now washing it in the passage, and trying to appease its screams by singing at the top of her voice,

"Green were the fields where my forefathers dwelt on,
Though our farm it was small yet we were content on."

We took it in turns to make our toilets one at a time: a business that we were unable to accomplish very thoroughly, as water was scarce, and we had but one looking-glass.

Breakfast was got in the same manner as supper, with the addition of oysters of vast size, brought to the house by a fisherman, but I could not relish them, as they were out of season, and had, I thought, a queer taste.

After breakfast the ceremony of bathing was to take place; and for that purpose we were all to proceed to the sea, which was near two miles distant from the house, part of the intervening land being a salt marsh. We equipped ourselves in the bathing-dresses we had brought with us: all the smaller waggons were prepared, and we set off to partake of a new pleasure. A narrow and precarious causeway took us over the salt marsh, which was a bottomless abyss of soft black mud, covered with long coarse grass, emitting an intolerable effluvium, and alive with musquitoes, which rose round us in clouds and settled on us in myriads. The salt marsh was unanimously declared *not* to be pleasant. It was, however, some relief to look at the seeming anomalies that

were scattered over it in the form of tall pink flowers of exceeding beauty, and such as I had never seen before.

We arrived at the beach, and were handed out of the waggons upon the level and shadeless sand, where not a rock nor even a hillock interrupted the burning glare of an unclouded sun ; and a long line of breakers were thundering and foaming tremendously against the shore, as if they brought with them the whole force of the vast Atlantic. Beyond the breakers the sea was calm and smooth, with no other motion than its own heaving undulation. We saw, far off, a ship standing towards New York, and a shallop running alongside of her to put a pilot on board.

I looked towards the north-east where the waters were lost in the immensity of distance ; and I imagined them stretching across a space of three thousand miles till they bathed the cliffs of "that land where in childhood I wandered." But my reverie was interrupted by one of the gentlemen taking my hand to lead me into the surf, in which, from the violence of the waves, I found it very difficult to keep either my feet or my breath.

When we had all been in the breakers, and had all come safely out of them, there never was a set of more unlovely figures. Some of the ladies had provided themselves with long flannel gowns and oiled silk caps, but the majority were in double calico wrappers and calico sun bonnets ; and the gentlemen in old shirts and trowsers, with handkerchiefs tied round their heads. I now understood the reason of the common remark "that few matches are made at the seashore."

We were all dripping with salt water, which ran in streams from our clothes ; and in this state we had to get into the waggons and ride home, there being no bathing-house in which we could change our dresses. So completely were our clothes saturated, that the bottoms of the waggons were filled with the water that dripped from them : and during the whole ride, we were obliged most painfully to hold up our feet, to keep them from being soaked in the pool.

Having returned to the house, we resumed our usual dresses ; and the gentlemen, taking their dinners with them in baskets, departed in quest of their daily sport. Unluckily, I had brought no books with me, concluding that I should find sufficient amusement without them. None of the other ladies thought of books, all their stockings being of a dead white. I inquired of our hostess if she had not a book to lend me. She produced a volume of the State Laws that

belonged to her husband (he being a magistrate as well as our landlord of Squankum), and a collection of old almanacks from a square hole over the kitchen fire-place; the same hole containing also the duster, and the two smoothing irons. None of these almanacks were of later date than the year 1792: and in less than an hour I had gone through all the receipts, anecdotes, verses, and admonitions against drunkenness, and had nothing left to read but the list of District Courts, and the rates of postage throughout the Union. What would I now have given for the flattest novel that ever issued from the Minerva Press! I could even have read one of Mrs Meeke's.

Four days and four nights passed away in unvaried sameness, only that the bride became more touchy, the knitting was finished, our stock of words had nearly run out, and our stock of provisions was beginning to fail. The last day, the eatables became scanty (some of them had long ceased to be fresh); the sporting failed, or perhaps the powder and shot: and had we remained any longer, our nic party would indeed have had "no pic-nic to pic." Therefore it was concluded that we should all turn our steps homeward.

When the time of departure arrived, there was a wonderful brightening of faces and loosening of tongues: and I began to think that in their own houses and with all their comforts about them, the members of our party might, perhaps, be very agreeable people. It was singular, however, that they had not yet learned the difference between pleasure and pain; for I found that they still designed, next season, to pay a visit in a similar manner to the same place, as they had done for many successive summers.—"Habit is second nature," and they had a habit of going to Squan.

XIII.

AN EXTRAORDINARY COON HUNT.

I'LL proceed, plus a few preliminaries, directly to a boy's Coon Hunt. It was our custom (Harry and I) to steal from our shed room two or three times a week, after the lights were out, and the governor's deep snore resounded through

wainscot and hall, and hasten beyond the garden walling to the trysting spot, where we found faithful Peter and the dogs. These latter have been alluded to as hare catchers, and being the only ones obtainable, we had to lead them or none against opossums, racoons, and ground-hogs; but through Peter's encouragements, and a dexterity acquired in many encounters, the fiercely ripping coon could seldom escape their first united grab; yet sometimes, at night, we would shake down a large male fellow on swampy grounds, where availing himself of briars and scattered pools, I've witnessed, with unflagging excitement, a war of fifteen minutes before the brave varmint was ours. No dogs lived that had more fun in fighting, and their constant victories had infused into them an obstinate courage rarely seen.

Of Pete, the good old nigger, I have to say, that he lived in a cabin with old Aunt Jenny. He raised many chickens, and made money by their sale, but the interesting broods were sometimes pitched into by gaunt marauders of the night, and his exchequer receipts made uncomfortably deficient. These outrages Pete charged chiefly upon the racoons. *Lex talionis* was his war-cry, and forthwith he became the uncompunctious destroyer! not assuaged by their capture and death, he feasted on their carcasses and sold their skins. His exhibitions of trophies won, and the recountals of his many hunts, inflamed our desires for participations in future. He, good fellow, could not resist us, and we often ransacked together the branches of the tangled ravines, returning home in time to catch a few hours' sleep. In past times there were many prophets, but the present teems with precocities—arithmetical wonders, dramatic geniuses, and, in another line, Harry and I were youthful prodigies. No one discovered our genius save Pete, or blazoned our prowess—but that was their misfortune, or their crime, for we cut out work and displayed conduct fit to antecede the exploits of a Cumming. Hitherto we had been able to conceal our deeds from the governor by the good management of Peter, such as cleaning our clothes and shoes very early; but one night, just at the close of winter, we did so smashing a business as to put a stopper on our hunts about those capes.

And now, most patient reader, who hast endured us thus far, place thy feet upon the mantelpiece, or indulge in some other variety of position, for the gas has escaped and we are approaching the earth.

After rendezvousing and circling the dwellings and school-

houses, a half-mile's trot brought us quickly to a great coon county. Swinging over the mill-race with leap-poles, we entered at first a sloping old field covered with broom sedge and prairie grass, and terminating in briars and bushes that in their turn fringe the lower and damper grounds embraced in the ravine; the opposite side of the branch was a steep hill, gapped, as we proceeded up the stream, with several smaller hollows. In a short time the dogs were very busy, and crowded forward so rapidly that they overtook two unfortunate opossums e'er they could gain a place of safety. The lazy and bashful rascals lay inoffensive as usual, while Peter stuck 'em like pigs, then bagged and shouldered them.

This put us in pleasant mood for the next half-hour, when the short and fierce bark of Bet, the terrier, was heard, seconded by the scarce disconnected yelps of the little fice. We had not run a hundred yards before we saw the dogs leaping up the sides of a scrubby little black-jack; what was our disappointment at perceiving only a small coon, not half grown! Pete shook it down with climbing, and the anxious Bet snapped it up alone and shook out the life, but to make it *deader* they all took a pulling grab. I had felt, I say, disappointed, but it was speedily dissipated by the dogs behaving as I had never before observed them to do. Without lagging until cheered onward to new discoveries, they dashed up the swamp at a spanking gait, Bet in the lead, on the same hot chase as the one just ended, and they hadn't run another hundred yards before they were in a whopping five-minute fight.

It seems we had invaded the pleasure-grounds and interrupted the domestic peace of an entire family. One of the juniors was the first victim of our charge; the other juniors we had either passed or overrun. The dam, who was a short distance ahead, hearing the death-cry of one that was dear, either tarried in her gait or hurried to assist. Fatal affection! it lured her to the dogs, who, in five minutes, hustled her beyond that bourne from which no coon has e'er returned.

"Look yonder, Pete!" said I.

"Golly bless my soul, Mas John! I dunno what to think; for I never see Bet do dat way b'fore—but run on you and Mas Harry, while I put dis one in de bag, and I'll catch up."

It appeared that Mr Coon, Esq., the father of his family, had behaved disgracefully. Instead of bringing up the rear, by which—as we presently shall be convinced—he could have saved the lives of his consort and their little one if not his

own, he led in the stead a furious retreat when Bet's first bark rang on his tympanum. He rallied not to the rescue like his noble and martyred companion, when the mortal wail of their young was borne on the air—he "heeded not, he cared not, he recked not for aught," but to gain some big tree or some hollow; but the dogs were so near to his ring tail, that he was forced up an ordinary-sized white oak, without a hiding-place or hollow about it, and with no other tree near. The branch was fifty yards distant, but the ground was spongy with water; numerous pools spotted the area, containing from a bushel to a hogshead of water each, and encircled by clusters of brittle and pitchy bushes; here and there was a clear space of a few yards square. There must have been an acre or two of this character of earth.

Before reaching the tree, all exclaimed, "I see him!" but getting nearer Pete said, "By Golly! Mas John, d' is two on 'em!" and so I was thinking, but Harry, who had been stooping to bring the object in a line with some bright stars, sang out—

"Pete, 'taint but one—I wonder if it's a coon."

Just then the moon emerged from a cloud, and there, plain enough, was but one coon.

"By Gemini! Mas John," exclaimed Pete, "I never see nuffin like dat b'fore; he big as a small bar. I wish we had a gun or a bull-dog; we never gwine to git *him*."

I had seen Pete do many deeds that to my youthfulness and weakness appeared great, and ranked him as an irresistible Samson, and this time being the first in which I had seen him in doubt, it caused me to say—

"What yer talking about, old nigger!—yer gwine t' let der coon whip yer?"

"Now, Mas Johnny, what make you tink dis child fraid o' any coon, or any dozen on 'em. I'll bring him down like de debbil!"

And the determined and hostile Pete ascended the tree with a stick in his mouth. As he neared the second crotch, the varmint, who had been quiet, ran out on an expanded limb, whitherwards Pete cautiously followed.

"Now, Mas John, I'm gwine to try and knock him in de head, for I'se afraid of dem dogs; de coon's too big for him."

And as the coon, by his movement, had showed plainly his proportions, I scarcely knew what to think of it, for he was twice as large as any one of the hundreds I had previously seen. The dogs being under him, he wouldn't jump

off, and so Pete, being now near enough, he raised his arm to knock him in the head; but before the stick had descended, the coon, with his peculiar angry whine, rushed towards Pete in the endeavour to leap on a higher limb. The eager darky forgot his position, and, in attempting to strike the animal with the left fist ere he had recovered from the impetus of his right-handed blow, the poor fellow fell heavily to the ground. He tried to rise, but with a groan sank back; he had broken a bone. When he told us so, little Harry, with tears for the tragedy, asked him what he should do for him. After considering a while, Pete raised on his elbow and answered—

“My little masters, I aint in much misery, but I can’t get up, and I must lay here till dey come for me from de house in de morning. You better go home to bed. I’m mighty sorry, too, dat I took you all out dis night, I is, indeed; for de governor ’ll stop all our hunting, and whip you, I reckon, too; so dis ’ll be de last coon hunt we have together.”

Then, raising on his arm still higher towards the tree, he shook his now impotent fist at the squatting coon.

“Oh! Mas Johnny, I’m mad wid dat coon; I don’t want him to eat my chickens, and den say he beat Pete; and if I thought as how I could make dem dare dogs drag him here, so’s I could get my hand on him, I’d give all de world.”

I had been feeling distress and embarrassment, but as reflection showed me clearly that our hunts were ended, and the governor’s switch the next probability—a change came over me. Pete’s earnest passion inflamed me, and as I sympathized in his desire I felt strong and big; I was swelling with anger, and grew bold and reckless. Pete tried to dissuade me from climbing the tree, but I was not to be shaken in my purpose, and, with much perseverance and trouble, succeeded in reaching the first crotch. After resting a while I calculated my forces; I had on thick boots, pulled on my buckskin gloves, tied on my leather cap, buttoned my jacket, and opened my spring-back knife. I suppose, as I was very little, that the coon wasn’t afraid, for he let me approach him so near that his retreat to any other part of the tree was cut off, unless over my head and body.

Knowing my weakness, I saw that my success must be the result of coolness and superior cunning. At last he came with his swinging tail, and his oo’e, oo’e, but the extended knife it was, and not my hand, that he bit so furiously. With a gash in his gums he made a backward spring, and as he tore up the bark with his teeth and claws, his gleaming

and determined eyes burned upon me. Without delay he came again with a ripping charge, as if he would brush me from the limb that I clasped with my legs; but, as the steadily directed knife entered his jaw, he took an incautious leap that carried him to the ground.

Now, dogs—brave dogs—dash on your foe,
Sink deep your fangs, and drink his gore;
Give not the savage varmint rest—
Hang to his throat, and crush his breast.

And they did pounce upon him, to be sure; over in a heap they'd roll with growls, and shakings, and yelps; there was tumbling and splashing in the pools, ripping and crashing through the elder bushes, and for half an hour there was not a steady clinch of one minute. I thought I had been occasionally mixed up in some good coon fights, but, compared to this, they were as comedy to tragedy.

I cannot recall, except by constraint, the particulars of any other, for this obtrudes itself as the fight of fights. It was invested with tragic interest—a battle, a dubious, a dangerous, and a bloody battle. A beast of the wild woods, weighing thirty pounds, agile and tenacious of life, armed with claws that would rip open a dog's belly—teeth that, like the wolf's, could bite out an entire piece, was brought to furious bay by three dogs—the smallest not half his weight, and the largest weighing but twenty-five pounds. If it had been in his nature to fight as steadily and tenaciously as a dog, his strength and his weapons were sufficient to conquer and kill six such dogs. When he found himself unceasingly beset, and the enemy on his back whenever he turned tail, he then resorted to more offensive efforts. He seized upon the dogs, one by one; he tore and gashed the cur, making him sing out, and the poor little Tip he ripped open, broke his ribs, and tore nearly in two. I dragged the little thing near Pete, who ended its sufferings. But most determined little Bet, the terrier—more sagacious and alert, more relentless in her grip, and of braver blood, and sterner stuff altogether—gave not one coward sign; she would only withdraw her buried teeth to avoid the coon's furious ripping, then sink her muzzle still deeper in.

Up to this time we had not been able to put in a lick (Harry and I), and we stood or ran around the combatants, filled with anxiety and the utmost excitement. I had given Harry my knife, and I held Pete's stick, both watching our

opportunities—we saw the game growing more serious and desperate, and waxed more eager and reckless ourselves. Bet's true blood was making her fiercer for her wounds; but I looked for the coon's victory, unless Harry or I could assist. As the unlucky cur yelled out again, Harry ran up to use the knife; but casting off the half-scared dog, the furious animal—with Bet on her quarters seeking a deadly hold—met Harry in mad career, jerked him down, and tore his leg badly, through all his clothing. As he was about to repeat the attack he received Harry's knife in his nose, and had to turn all his energies against Bet, who pressed him harder and harder. The cur was getting so sneaky that he wouldn't grab and shake, unless he could do so somewhat safely; and, though he still helped a little, the battle was carried on chiefly by Bet and myself—I dealing blows, when I was able to do so, on the coon alone. Once he had Bet down in the water, where I thought he would drown her. I struck repeatedly with my stick, but he was so intent on keeping his advantage that he did not mind me; I was so mad at his turning it upon us so smart as to be taking one at a time, that I rushed in and tore him from dear little Bet.

With increasing fury he charged on me, and as I reached the edge of the pool he bore me down, and gave me tooth and toe-nail till my jacket was jerked to shreds, my suspenders broken, my breeches torn down, and my back scratched and gashed besides; he then jerked off my leather cap, and I felt the wild villain's teeth scraping on my scull. Ah! he scored it to me, and his marks are yet upon me. Just then dear little Bet was on him in full and unabated rage, and with a deadlier hold than ever. I felt my trickling blood and my wounds, and got raving mad.

Pete had crawled in sight, and called out "Mas Johnny, get de knife, and stick it in all de time 'fore de dam debbil gets another chance; he's been biting and hurting you; now pay him for it—dat's de way, give it him." Four or five minutes more, and the fiercest fight that I have been in or seen ended. The results I have given you, and the hour and a half seemed but a moment in passing, for the contest was rushed from first to last, danger attendant, and the excitement intense. The undaunted little terrier, forsaken by the cur, and overmatched, with many and honourable wounds, who would have fought for ever, and "never said die," to her was the victory, and she was so endeared to me afterwards that I kept her to her latest breath.

The governor and the boys, and the neighbours all, travelled for days to see us, the dogs and the battle ground, that retained traces of the encounter for a month or two thereafter. The wounded recovered, even Harry and I also, whose mothers had no idea we were out; and thus ends this glance at youthful days, transcribed from faithful memory's page.

XIV.

THE LUMBERER'S CAMP.

THE outfit for the lumberer's camp having arrived upon the territory previously explored, arrangements are at once made to locate and build our winter camps. To determine upon the best point is by no means an easy task, it being very difficult to fix upon the location in a strange and imperfectly explored forest. Wood and water privileges are to be taken into account; a central position in respect to the timber; the landing, the locating of the main roads, &c., are to be attended to. To combine all these qualities, where we can see only a few rods in advance on account of the trees and thickets, and our work must necessarily cover hundreds of acres of wild land, it must be confessed is no ordinary task. I have seldom taxed my judgment as severely on any subject as in judiciously locating a logging establishment.

These preliminaries being settled, we commence "right merrily" our camp. The top strata of leaves and turf are removed from the spot upon which the structure is to be erected; this is necessary, as we should otherwise be in great danger of fire from the dry turf. While this process is going forward, others are engaged in felling the trees on the spot, and cutting them the length determined upon for our edifice. The work commences by throwing the larger logs into a square, notching the ends together. Thus one tier after another is laid up until the walls attain the proper height, the smallest logs being used to finish out the upper tiers. In form they resemble a tin baker, rising some eight feet in front, while the roof pitches down within two or three feet of the ground in the rear. A double camp is constructed by putting two such squares face to face, with the fire in the middle. The spruce tree is gener-

ally selected for camp building, it being light, straight, and quite free from sap. The roof is covered with shingles from three to four feet in length. These are split from trees of straight and easy rift, such as the pine, spruce, and cedar. The shingles are not nailed on, but secured in their place by laying a long heavy pole across each tier or course. The roof is finally covered with the boughs of the fir, spruce, and hemlock, so that when the snow falls upon the whole, the warmth of the camp is preserved in the coldest weather. The crevices between the logs constituting the walls are tightly calked with moss gathered from surrounding trees.

The interior arrangement is very simple. One section of the area of the camp is used for the dining-room, another for the sleeping apartment, and a third is appropriated to the kitchen. These apartments are not denoted by partitioned walls, but simply by small poles from six inches in diameter, laid upon the floor of the camp (which is the pure loam) running in various directions, and thus forming square areas of different dimensions, and appropriated as above suggested. The head-board to our bed consists of one or more logs, which form also the back wall of the camp. The foot-board is a small pole, some four or six feet from the fire. Our bedstead is mother earth, upon whose cool but maternal bosom we strew a thick coating of hemlock, cedar, and fir boughs. The width of this bed is determined by the number of occupants, varying from ten to twenty feet. Bed-clothes are suited to the width of the bed by sewing quilts and blankets together. The occupants as a general thing, throw off their outer garments only when they "turn in" for the night. These hardy sons of the forest envy not those who roll on beds of down; their sleep is sound and invigorating; they need not court the gentle spell, turning from side to side, but, quietly submitting, sink into its profound depths.

Directly over the foot-pole, running parallel with it, and in front of the fire, is the "*deacon seat*." I think it would puzzle the greatest lexicographer of the age to define the word, or give its etymology as applied to a seat, which indeed it is, and nothing more nor less than a seat; but, so far as I can discover from those most deeply learned in the antiquarianism of the logging swamp, it has nothing more to do with deacons, or deacons with it, than with the pope. The seat itself, though the name be involved in a mystery, is nothing less nor more than a plank hewn from the trunk of a spruce tree some four inches thick by twelve inches wide, the length generally corresponding

with the width of the bed, raised some eighteen inches above the foot-pole, and made stationary. This seat constitutes our sofa or settee, to which we add a few stools, which make up the principal part of our camp furniture. Should any of my readers ever be situated beyond the reach of cabinet-makers, but in the vicinity of the forest, I may introduce them into the secret of chair-making without the necessity of any tools except an axe. Split the top part of a trunk of a spruce or fir tree in halves, cut a stick of the right length upon which three or four stout limbs grow; trim off the limbs of a sufficient length to suit your fancy; smooth the piece of timber to which they adhere by hewing, and your seat is completed. I can assure the reader that the instances are rare in which it becomes necessary to send them to the cabinet-maker for repairs, especially to have the legs glued in.

The luxury of a temporary table is now pretty generally enjoyed, with plates, knives and forks, tin dippers for tea and coffee, and sometimes cups and saucers. Formerly the deacon seat was used instead of a table, and a large frying-pan served for a platter for the whole crew. Around this the men would gather, each putting in his bread or potato, and salt fish, to sop in the pork fat; and never did king or courtier enjoy the luxuries of a palace more exquisitely than do our loggers this homely fare. On the St Croix River, lumbermen generally adhere, from choice, to the original custom of eating from the frying-pan. Bread and beans are baked in a large "Dutch oven," which is placed in a hole dug in the earth by the side of the fire, and entirely covered with hot coals and embers. In this position it is allowed to remain until the contents are done, when the ashes and cover are removed. I need not presume to inform the skilful cook that this mode of baking is unequalled. Our camp-fire is made on the ground next to the front wall, which is sometimes protected by a tier of large stones, but in other instances we simply set up two short stakes, against which enormous back-logs rest. After supper, each night un-failingly a very large fire is built to sleep by. Some of the wood used is so large that it often burns twenty-four hours before being entirely consumed. The amount of fuel made use of in building one camp-fire would supply an ordinary fire a week.

It is not an unfrequent occurrence, of course, for camps to take fire in this exposed situation, but some one generally discovers it in season to extinguish it by the timely application of snow or water.

Having completed our own cabin, we proceed next to construct a hovel for the oxen, which are yet behind. In erecting this, the same order in architecture is observed as in that of the camp, the timber of which it is composed, however, being much larger than that with which our own habitation is constructed. With the trunks of trees the walls are carried up nearly equal in height, leaving one side, however, lower enough than the other to give a moderate pitch to the roof, which is covered with the same kind of material as that of the camp. In the camp, for the workmen, there is no floor but the earth; the ox hovel, however, has a flooring made of small poles laid closely together, and hewed down with some degree of smoothness with the adze, and in the final finish the crevices in the walls are plastered with clay or ox manure. A temporary shed is thrown up in front, which serves as a *depôt* for hay and provender.

No little pains are bestowed upon the conveniences designed for the team. With the exception of sporting horses, never have I witnessed more untiring devotion to any creature than is bestowed upon the ox when under the care of a good teamster. The last thing before "turning in," he lights his lantern and repairs to the ox hovel. In the morning, by the peep of day, and often before, his faithful visits are repeated, to hay, and provender, and card, and yoke up. No man's berth is so hard, among all the hands, as the teamster's. Every shoe and nail, every hoof and claw, and neck, yokes, chains, and sled, claim constant attention. While the rest of the hands are sitting or lounging around the liberal fire, shifting for their comfort, after exposure to the winter frosts through the day, he must repeatedly go out to look after the comfort of the sturdy, faithful ox. And then, for an hour or two in the morning again, while all, save the cook, are closing up the sweet and unbroken slumbers of the night, so welcome and necessary to the labourer, he is out amid the early frost with, I had almost said, the care of a mother, to see if "old Turk" is not loose—whether "Bright" favours the near fore-foot (which felt a little hot the day before), as he stands upon the hard floor—and then to inspect "Swan's" provender-trough, to see if he has eaten his meal, for it was carefully noted that, at the "watering-place" last night, he drank but little; while at the further end of the "tie-up" he thinks he hears a little clattering noise, and presently "Little Star" is having his shins gently rapped, as a token of his master's wish to raise his foot to see if some nail has not given way in the loosened shoe; and this not for

once, but every day, with numberless other cares connected with his charge.

A competent hand in this profession generally calculates to do a good winter's hauling, and bring his team out in the spring in quite as good flesh as when they commenced in the early part of the season. But as in all other matters, so in this, there are exceptions to the general rule. Some teamsters spoil their cattle, and bring them out in the spring miserably poor, and nearly strained to death. Such a practice, however, cannot be regarded as either merciful or economical. So far as true policy is concerned, it is much better to keep a team well. What may be gained by hard pushing during the former part of the season will be more than made up during the latter, when the teams are moderately urged and well kept, and then you have a good team still for future labour.

Having completed our winter residences, next in order comes the business of looking out and cutting the "main," and some of the principal "branch roads." These roads, like the veins in the human body, ramify the wilderness to all the principal "clumps" and "groves of pine" embraced in the permit.

We have here no "turnpikes" nor railways, but what is often more interesting. No pencillings can excel the graceful curves found in a main road as it winds along through the forest,—uniform in width of track, hard-beaten and glassy in its surface, polished by the sled and logs which are so frequently drawn over it. Each fall of snow, when well trodden, not unlike repeated coats of paint on a rough surface, serves to cover up the unevenness of the bottom, which in time becomes very smooth and even. And, besides, no street in all our cities is so beautifully studded with trees, whose spreading branches affectionately interlace, forming graceful archways above. Along this roadside, on the way to the landing, runs a serpentine pathway for the "knight of the goad," whose deviations are marked now outside this tree, then behind that "windfall," now again intercepting the main road, skipping along like a dog at one's side. To pass along this road in mid-winter, one would hardly suspect the deformities which the dissolving snows reveal in the spring—the stumps and knolls, skids and roots, with a full share of mud-sloughs, impassable to all except man, or animals untrammelled with the harness.

In the process of making these roads, the first thing in order is to look out the best location for them. This is done

by an experienced hand, who "spots" the trees where he wishes the road to be "swamped." We usually begin at the landing, and cut back towards the principal part of the timber to be hauled.

In constructing this road, first all the underbush is cut and thrown on one side; all trees standing in its range are cut close to the ground, and the trunks of prostrated trees cut off and thrown out, leaving a space from ten to twelve feet wide. The tops of the highest knolls are scraped off, and small poles, called skids, are laid across the road in the hollows between. Where a brook or slough occurs, a pole-bridge is thrown across it.

These preparatory arrangements are entered upon and executed with a degree of interest and pleasure by lumbermen, scarcely credible to those unacquainted with such a mode of life and with such business.

XV.

A NIGHT ADVENTURE ON THE MISSOURI.

At the head of a ravine on the border of the river Platte, one bright night in June, was gathered a party of Missouri hunters, who were encamped after a day's chase for buffalo. The evening's repast was over, and as they stretched themselves in easy attitudes around their stack of rifles, each looked at the other with a kind of questioning expression, of whether it should be *sleep* or a *yarn*? The bright moon, with full round face, streamed down into their midst, and sprinkled her silvery sheen over shrub and flower, investing night in those vast solitudes with a strange charm which forbids sleep, and with common consent they raised themselves into a sitting posture and proposed a "talk," as the red-skins say. Dan Elkhorn was the leader of the party, and all knew his store of adventure inexhaustible, so a unanimous call was made upon Dan for a story. "Come, Dan," cried a crony, "give us something to laugh at, and let us break this silence, which seems to breed a spirit of melancholy—stir us up, old fellow, do!"

Dan pulled his long knife out of his belt, and laying it

before him, smoothed back his long gray hair. He was a genuine specimen of the hardy American mountaineer,—like the Indian, he dressed in deer-skins and wore the moccason, while every seam in his iron countenance told of 'scapes and peril. Seeing that all were attention he commenced—

“Well, draw up closer, boys, so I shan't have to holler, 'cause breth is gittin' kind a short with me now, and I want to pacer it out to last pretty strong till the wind-up hunt. You, Mike, keep your eye skinned for Ingins, 'cause ef we git deep in a yarn here, without a top eye open, the cussed varmints 'll pop on us unawars, and be stickin' some of thur quills in us—nothin' like havin' your eye open and insterments ready. I've a big idea to gin you an account of some fun I had with an old *bar*, on the Missouri, when I was a younker, and considerably more spry than I am jest now. I want to tell you fust, boys, that bars are knowin' animals, and they kin jest tell a younker of the human kind as easily as they kin a small pig from the old sow;—they don't fool with me now, for they've got to *know me*!

“Well, old Alic Dennison, a neighbour of mine on the Missouri, had bin about two years up in the mountains, and when he came home he gin a treat to all the fellars within thirty miles of him—that was jest seven families—and among 'em, in course, I got an invite. Alic and I had sot our cabins on opposite sides of the drink, near enough to see each other, and a red-skin, ef he'd come on a scalp visit, would a bin diskivered by either. When Alic's frolic was to cum off, I was on hand, sartain. About evenin' I got my small dug-out, and fixin' my rifle carefully in the fore eend, and stickin' my knife in the edge whar it would be handy, I jest paddled over the drink.

“A little above our location thar wur a bend in the stream which a kind a turned the drift tother eend up, and planted them about the spot between our cabins—snags and sawyers, jest thar, wur dreadful plenty, and it took mity nice padlin' to git across without tiltin'; howsever, I slid atween 'em, serpentine fashion, and got over clar as a pet coon. Thar wur considerable folks at Alic's, fur some of the families in them diggins had about twenty in number, and the gals among 'em warn't any on your pigeon creaturs, that a fellar dassent tech fur fear of spilin' 'em, but raal scrougers—any on 'em over fourteen could lick a *bar*, easy. My decided opinion jest now is, that thur never was a grittier crowd congregated before on that stream, and sich other dancin' and

drinkin' and eatin' *bar* steaks, and corn dodger, and huggin' the gals, don't happen but once in a fellar's lifetime, and scarcely that often. Old Alic had a darter Molly, that war the most enticin', gizzard-ticklin', heart-distressin' *feline* creatur that ever made a fellar git owdacious, and I seed Tom Sellers cavortin' round her like a young buffalo—he was puttin' in the biggest kind a licks in the way of courtin', and between her eyes and the sweetened whiskey he'd drank, you'd a thought the fellar would a bursted. Jest to make matters lively, I headed up alongside of Molly, and shyed a few soft things at her, sech as askin' how she liked bar steaks cooked, and if Jim Tarrant warn't equal in the elbow to a mad *panter's* tail, when he war fiddlin' that last reel, and sech amusin' light conversation. Well, boys, Tom started swellin' *instantan*. He tried to draw her attention from me; but I got talkin' about some new improvements I war contemplatin' about my cabin, and the cow I expected up from St Louis, 'sides lonely feelins I'd bin havin' lately, and Tom couldn't git in a show of talk, edgeways. Didn't he git mad?—wur you ever near enough to a panter when his *har* riz with wrath? Well, ef you have, you can create some idea of Tom's state of mind, and how electricity, from liquor and love, run out to the eends of his head kiverin'. It wur easy to see he wur a gittin' dangerous, so I slid off and left him alone with the gal. Arter I got a talkin' to another one of the settlers' young women, Molly kept lookin' at me, and every now and then sayin' somethin' pleasin' across to me, while she warn't payin' any attention to Tom at all. He spread himself into a stiff bow and left her; then movin' across the floor like a wounded deer, he steadied himself on the back of my seat, and lookin' me in the face, says:

“*Mister* Elkhorn, I shud be strenuously obleeged to you ef you'll step down thar with me by the old persimmen tree.’

“I nodded my head, and told him to trot outside and wait till I got the docyments, and as soon as he moved I sent his old *daddy* to accompany him. I jest informed the old fellar that Tom wanted a fight, and as he was too full of corn juice to cut carefully, I didn't want to take advantage of him. The old man said he was obleeged to me, and moved out. Tom, thinkin' it wur me, staggered ahead of the old man, and I concluded, as it war near mornin', to leave; 'cause I knew when Tom found out his daddy was along with him instead of me, he'd have a fight any how. I acknowledge the corn, boys, that when I started my track warn't anythin' like a

bee-line;—the sweeten'd whiskey had made me powerful thick-legged; but arter a fashion I got to my dug-out, with nothin' of weapon along in the world but the paddle. Thar war jest enough light to tell that snags wur plenty, and jest enough corn juice inside to make a fellar not care a cuss fur 'em. I felt strong as a hoss, too, and the dug-out hadn't more'n leaped six lengths from the bank afore—*zip—chug—co-souse* I went—the front eend jest lifted itself again a sawyer and emptied me into the *element*! In about a second I came up bang agin a snag, and I guess I grabbed it sudden, while old Missouri curl'd and purl'd around me as ef she was in a hurry to git to the mouth, so she might muddy the Massissippi. I warn't much skeer'd, but still I didn't jest like to hang on thar till daylight, and I didn't want to make a fuss fur fear they'd say I war skary. I had sot myself on the eend of the snag, and was jest tryin' to cypher out some way of gettin' to shore, when I thought I diskiver'd a fellar sittin' on the bank. At fust, he looked so black in the coat I thought it war Tom Sellers, who'd sot himself down to wait fur a fight:—Tom had on at the frolic a black blanket coat with a velvet collar, and he thought it particularly nice. Arter lookin' at him move about and sit down on his hunkers once or twice, I thought I'd holler to him; but he appeared so dreadful drunk that I didn't expect much help from him.

"'Tom,' shouted I, 'come out here with a dug-out, and help a fellar off, will you?'

"He sot still, without sayin' a word. 'Well,' says I to him, 'you're meaner than an Ingin! and would bait a trap with your daddy's leggins.' He didn't move fur a spell; at last into the drink he popped, and now, thought I, he *is* mad and *no* dispute. I could see him paddlin' right fur me, and I holler'd to him that I had no insterments, but he didn't say a whisper, ony shoved along the faster. At last up he come agin my snag, and the next minit he reached fur me, and then he tried to fix his teeth into my moccason; so guessin' it war time to do somethin', I jest grabbed fur his muzzle, and I'm blessed, boys, ef it warn't a great *he bar*! The cussed varmint had watched me from the house and seed I had no weapons, and when I upsot he just counted me his'n, and was quietly calculatin' on the bank how he'd best git me out of the water. I had nothin' in the yearth but a small fancy penknife, but I stuck that in him so quick that he let me go, and while he swam for one snag I reached for another. I never heerd a bar laugh out loud afore, but I'm a sucker ef

he didn't snigger twice at the way he rolled me off my log.

"We sot lookin' at one another fur a spell, when I seed the varmint gittin' ready to call on me agin, and in about a second more off he dropped, and straight he took a shute for my location. As he came up close to me I slit his ear with the small blade, and he got mad; but jest as he was circling round me to git a good hold, I dropped on to his hinder eend and grabbed his har, and I guess I made him move fur shore a leetle faster than a steam-boat—my little blade kept him dreadful *itchy*. Well, the fun of the thing wur, boys, as soon as the varmint teched shore, he turned right round on me, and I'm cussed if I hadn't to turn round too, and scratch for the snag agin! with that consarned *bar* feelin' my legs with his paw every stroke I war makin' to git away from him! I got a little skary now, and a good deal mad, fur thar the varmint war a waitin' for me, and whinin' as ef he had been ill-treated, and thar I wur perched up on a sawyer, bobbin' up and down in the water. At last I sot a hollerin' and kept on at it, and hollered louder, until I seed some one cum from the house, and singin' out agin they answered me. I asked who it war, and found that it war Molly, old Alic's darter; so I gin her a description of my siteaytion, and she war into a dug-out in a minit, and paddlin' towards me. I believe I said wonce, boys, that bars wur knowin' critters, but ef thar's anythin' true on this yearth, it's the fact, that this consarned animal had made up his mind to upshot that gal, and I'm blessed ef he didn't jest as cute as ef he'd bin human! Startin' from his snag he swam to the dug-out, put up both paws, and over it went—over went Molly into the stream, and off slid Mister *bar*, laffin' out *loud!* as I'm a white man.

"I seized Molly as she came floatin' towards me, and stuck her upon my sawyer, while I started for an adjinin' snag. I could hear Molly grittin' her teeth, she war so bilin' mad, and jest as soon as she could git breath, she hollered to me to be sure I never rested till I killed that varmint. I swore on that snag that I'd grow thin chasin' the critter, and she seemed to git pacified. Well, thar we wur, in the stream, and it a leetle too rough to swim in easy, so we had to sing out for help, and I yelled till I war nigh onto hoarse, afore anythin' livin' stirred about the house; at last, nigger Jake came down to the edge of the river, jest as day was breakin', and puttin' his hand over his eyes, he hollers—

"'Why, Massa Dan, is dat you wot's been hollowin' eber so long for somebody!'

“‘You’ve jest took the notion to cum see, have you, you lazy nigger—now git a dug-out and come out here and git your missus and me off these snags, and do it quick too, or I’ll make *you* holler!’

“‘What, Missus dar *too*!’ shouted the nigger, ‘well, dat’s funny—de Lor!’ and off the cussed blueskin started fur the house, and in a few minits all that could gethered out to see us and laugh at our water locations.

“I had bin gittin’ riled by degrees, and now was at a dangerous pint—the steam began to rise off on me till thar wur a small fog above my head, and as the half-drunken varmints roared a laffin, and cracked their jokes about our courtin’ in the middle of the drink, I got awful excited. ‘I’ll make ribbons of every man among you,’ says I, ‘when I git whar thar’s a chance to fight.’ And then the cussed crew roared the louder. Tom Sellers yelled out that we’d bin tryin’ to *elope*, and this made Molly mad,—her daddy got a little mad too, and I bein’ already mad, thar wur a wrathful trio on us, and the old fellow said, ef he thought I’d been playin’ a two-faced game, and bitin’ his friendship like a pizen varmint, he’d drop me off the log I wur on with a ball from his rifle. I jest told him to fire away and be d—d, for I wur wore out a patience. Some of the boys held him, while others got the dug-out and came to our assistance. I jest got them to drop me on my side of the river, and to send over my rifle, and as soon as it war on hand I onloosed my dog Yelp, and started to wipe out my disgrace.

“That infernal bar, as soon as he’d tossed Molly in the stream, started for the woods; but, as ef he had reasoned on the chances, the varmint came to the conclusion that he couldn’t git away, and so got up into a crotch of a low tree, about a quarter of a mile from my cabin. Old Yelp smelled him, and as soon as I clapped peeper on him I let sliver, when the varmint dropped like a log,—I went to him and found he’d bin dead for an hour. My little blade couldn’t a killed him, so it’s my opinion, clearly entertained, that the owdacious varmint, knowin’ I’d kill him for his trick, jest climbed up thar whar I could easy find him, and died to spite me!

“His hide, and hard swearin’, got me and Molly out of our elopin’ scrape, and the lickin’ I gin Tom Sellers that spring has made us good friends ever sence. ‘He don’t wonce ventur’ to say anythin’ about that *bar scrape*, without my permission!’”

XVI.

A HELP BUT NOT A SERVANT.

"HILLOA there! hilloa! where under the canopy *is* all the folks? be a joggin', can't ye?" shouted one of the newly arrived.

Mr Gaston hurried as fast as his poor blind eyes would allow, and his wife threw fresh wood upon the fire, and swept the rough hearth anew, as well as she could with the remnant of a broom.

This was scarcely done when we heard voices approaching—at first mingled into a humming unison with the storm, then growing more distinguishable. A very shrill treble overtopped forms of female exclamation.

"O dear!" "O mercy!" "O bless me!" "O papa!" "O! I *shall* be drowned—smothered!" "O dear!" but we must not pretend to give more than a specimen.

A portly old gentleman now made his appearance, bearing, flung over his shoulder, what seemed at first view a bolster cased in silk, so limp and helpless was his burden. Behind him came, as best she might, a tall and slender lady, who seemed his wife; and, after scant salutation to the mistress of the cottage, the two old people were at once anxiously occupied in unrolling the said bolster, which proved, after the Champollion process was completed, to be a very delicate and rather pretty young lady, their daughter.

After, or rather with, this group entered a bluff, ruddy, well-made young man, who seemed to have been charioteer, and to whom it was not unreasonable to ascribe the adjuration mentioned at the head of our chapter. He brought in some cushions and a great-coat, which he threw into a corner, establishing himself thereafter with his back to the fire, from which advantageous position he surveyed the company at his leisure.

"The luggage must be brought in," said the elderly gentleman.

"Yes! I should think it had oughter," observed the young man in reply; "*I* should bring it in, if it was mine, any how!"

"Why don't you bring it in then?" asked the gentleman, with rather an ominous frown.

"I! well, I don't know but what I could, upon a pinch. But, look here, uncle! I want you to take notice of one thing—I didn't engage to wait upon ye. I a'n't nobody's nigger, mind that! I'll be up to my bargain. I came on for a teamster. If you took me for a servant, you're mistaken in the child, sir!"

"However," he continued, as if natural kindness were getting the better of cherished pride, "I can always help a gentleman, if so be that he asks me *like* a gentleman; and, upon the hull, I guess I'm rather stubbeder than you be, so I'll go ahead."

And with this magnanimous resolution the youth departed, and with some help from our host soon filled up every spare corner, and some that could ill be spared, with a multifarious collection of conveniences very inconvenient under present circumstances. Three prodigious travelling-trunks of white leather formed the main body, but there were bags and cases without end, and, to crown all, a Spanish guitar.

"That is all, I believe," said the old gentleman, addressing the ladies, as a load was set down.

"All!" exclaimed the teamster; "I should hope it was! and what anybody on earth can want with sich lots o' fixins, I'm sure's dark to me. If I was startin' for Texas I shouldn't want no more baggage than I could tie up in a handkercher. But what's curious to me is, where we're all a-goin' to sleep to-night. This here rain don't talk o' stoppin', and here we've got to stay if we have to sleep, like pins in a pin-cushion, all up on eend. It's my vote that we turn these contraptions, the whole bilin' on 'em, right out into the shed, and jist make up a good big shake-down, with the buffaloes and cushions."

The young lady, upon this, looked ineffable things at her mamma, and, indeed, disgust was very legible upon the countenance of all these unwilling guests. The house and its inhabitants, including our inoffensive and accidental selves, underwent an unmeasured stare, which resulted in no very respectful estimate of the whole and its particulars. Nor was this to be wondered at, for as to the house, it was, as we have said, one of the poorest and not one of the best of log-houses—there is a good deal of difference,—and the people were much poorer than the average of our settlers.

The young lady at least, and probably her parents, had never seen the interior of these cabins before; indeed, the

damself, on her first unrolling, had said, very naturally, "Why, papa, is this a *house*?"

Then, as to the appearance of our little party, it was of a truly western plainness, rendered doubly plain, even in our own eyes, by contrast with the city array of the later comers. Theirs was in all the newest gloss of fashion, bedimmed a little, it is true, by the uncourtly rain, but still handsome; and the young lady's travelling-dress displayed the taste so often exhibited by our young countrywomen on such occasions—it was a costume fit for a round of morning visits.

A rich green silk, now well draggled; a fine Tuscan-bonnet, a good deal trimmed within and without, and stained ruinously by its soaked veil; the thinnest kid shoes, and white silk stockings figured with mud, were the remains of the dress in which Miss Angelica Margold had chosen to travel through the woods. Her long ringlets hung far below her chin with scarce a remnant of curl, and her little pale face wore an air of vexation which her father and mother did their best most duteously to talk away.

"This is dreadful!" she exclaimed in no inaudible whisper, drawing her long damp locks through her jewelled fingers with a most disconsolate air: "It is really dreadful! We can never pass the night here."

"But what else can we do, my love?" rejoined the mamma. "It would kill you to ride in the rain—and *you* shall have a comfortable bed at any rate."

This seemed somewhat consoling. And while Mrs Margold and her daughter continued discussing these matters in an under-tone, Mr Margold set about discovering what the temporary retreat could be made to afford besides shelter.

"This wet makes one chilly," he said. "Haven't you a pair of bellows to help the fire a little?"

The good woman of the house tried her apron and then the good man tried his straw hat—but the last wood had been wet, and seemed not inclined to blaze.

"Bellowses!" exclaimed the young man (whose name we found to be Butts), "we can do our own blowin' in the woods. Here! let me try;" and with the old broom-stump he flirted up a fire in a minute, only scattering smoke and ashes on all sides.

The ladies retreated in dismay, a movement which seemed greatly to amuse Mr Butts.

"Don't you be scart!" he said; "ashes never pison'd anybody yet."

Mr Margold was questioning Mrs Gaston as to what could be had for tea,—forgetting, perhaps, that a farmer's house is not an inn, where chance comers may call for what they choose without offence.

"But I suppose you have tea—and bread and butter—and ——"

"Dear!" exclaimed the poor woman, "I haven't seen any but sage tea these three months;—and as for bread, I could make you some Johnny cake if you like that; but we have had no wheat flour this summer, for my old man was so crowded to pay doctor bills and sich, that he had to sell his wheat. We've butter, and I believe I may say it's pretty good."

"Bless my soul! no bread!" said the old gentleman.

"No tea!" exclaimed his wife.

"O dear! what an awful place!" sighed Miss Angelica, piteously.

"Well! I vote we have a Johnny-cake," said the driver; "you make us a Johnny-cake, aunty, and them that can't make a good supper off of Johnny-cake and butter deserves to go hungry, that's a fact!"

Mrs Gaston, though evidently hurt by the rude manner of her guests, set herself silently at work in obedience to the hint of Mr Butts; while that gentleman made himself completely at home, took the little girl in his lap with the loving title of "Sis," and cordially invited Mr Margold to sit down on a board which he had placed on two blocks, to eke out the scanty number of seats.

"Come, uncle," said the facetious Mr Butts, "jes' take it easy, and you'll live the longer. Come and sit by me, and leave more room for the women-folks, and we'll do fust-rate for supper."

Mr Butts had evidently discovered the true philosophy, but his way of inculcating it was so little attractive, that the Margolds seemed to regard him only with an accumulating horror.

Hitherto we had scarcely spoken, but, rather enjoying the scene, had bestowed ourselves and our possessions within as small a compass as possible, and waited the issue. But these people looked so thoroughly uncomfortable, so hopelessly out of their element, and seemed, moreover, by decree of the ceaseless skies, so likely to be our companions for the night, that we could not help taking pity on them, and offering such aid as our more mature experience of forest life had provided.

Our champagne basket was produced, and the various articles it contained gave promise of a considerable amendment of Mrs Gaston's tea-table. A small canister of black tea and some sparkling sugar gave the crowning grace to the whole, and, as these things successively made their appearance, it was marvellous to observe how the facial muscles of the fashionables gradually relaxed into the habitually bland expression of politer atmospheres. Mrs Margold—who looked ten years younger when she smoothed the peevish wrinkles from her brow—now thought it worth while to bestow a quite gracious glance at our corner, and her husband actually turned his chair, which had for some time presented its back full to my face.

We got on wondrously well after this. Mrs Gaston, who was patience and civility personified, very soon prepared a table which was nearly large enough to serve all the grown people; and, as she announced that all was ready, Mr Butts, who had been for some time balancing a chair very critically on its hinder feet, wheeled round at once to the table, and politely invited the company to sit down. As there was no choice, the strangers took their seats, with prim faces enough, and Mrs Gaston waited to be invited to make tea, while her poor half-blind husband quietly took his place with the children to await the second table.

Mr Butts was now in his element. He took particular pains to press everybody to eat of everything, and observing that Miss Angelica persisted in her refusal of whatever he offered her, he cut with his own knife a bountiful piece of butter, and placed it on her plate with an air of friendly solicitude.

The damsel's stare would infallibly have frozen any young man of ordinary sensibility, but Mr Butts, strong in conscious virtue, saw and felt nothing but his own importance; and, moreover, seemed to think gallantry required him to be specially attentive to the only young lady of the party. "Why, you don't eat nothing!" he exclaimed; "ridin' don't agree with you, I guess! now, for my part, it makes me as savage as a meat-axe! If you travel much after this fashion, you'll grow littler and littler; and you're little enough already, I should judge."

It was hardly in human nature to stand this, and Mr Margold, provoked beyond the patience which he had evidently prescribed to himself, at last broke out very warmly upon Butts, telling him to mind his own business, and sundry other things not particularly pleasant to relate in detail.

"O! you're wrathy, a'n't ye? Why, I didn't mean nothing,

but what was civil! We're plain-spoken folks in this new country."

Mr Margold seemed a little ashamed of his sudden blaze when he found how meekly it was met, and he took no further notice of his republican friend, who, on his part—though he managed to finish his supper with commendable *sang-froid*—was evidently shorn of his beams for the time.

XVII.

A HELP BUT NOT A SERVANT.

CHAPTER II.

Most lamentably amusing was the distress of Miss Angelica when it became necessary to concert measures for passing a night in a crowded log-cabin. The prospect was not a very comfortable one, but the view taken of its horrors by these city people was so ludicrously exaggerated that I am sure no spectator could help laughing. The philosophy that cannot stand one night's rough lodging should never travel west of Lake Erie. Not that the lodging anywhere in these western wilds is likely to be found more really uncomfortable than is often the lot of visitors at the Springs during crowded seasons; but fashionable sufferings are never quite intolerable.

The sleeping arrangements were of a more perplexing character than those which had been fortunately devised for the tea. There were two large beds and a trundle-bed, and these, with a scanty supply of bedding, comprised our available means; and besides our tea-party, two little boys had come dripping home from school to add to our numbers. After much consultation, many propositions, and not a few remarks calculated rather to wound the feelings of our civil entertainers, it was concluded to put the two large beds close together in order to enlarge their capabilities, and this extensive couch was to hold all the "women-folks" and some of the children. The trundle-bed by careful stowage took the little ones; and for the old gentleman, a couch of buffalo-ropes and carriage-cushions was skilfully prepared by none other than the forgiving Mr Butts, who seemed disposed to forget past rebuffs, and to exert

himself very heartily in the public service. This disinterested individual was perfectly content to repose Indian fashion, with his feet to the fire, and anything he could get for a pillow; and the master of the house stretched himself out after the same manner.

When all was done, Mrs Gaston made the ordinary cotton-sheet-partition for the benefit of those who chose to undress; and then began to prepare herself for the rest, which I am sure she needed. All seemed well enough for weary travellers, and, at any rate, these poor people had done their best. I hoped that all fault-finding would soon be hushed in sleep.

But it became evident ere long that Miss Margold did not intend to become a person of so small consequence. She had disturbed her father several times by requests for articles from different parts of the luggage, without which she declared she could not think of going to bed. She had received from her mother the attendance of a waiting-maid, without offering the slightest service in return, and now, when all her ingenuity seemed to be exhausted, she suddenly discovered that it would be in vain for her to think of sleeping in a bed where there were so many people, and she decided on sitting up all night.

A silence expressive of the deepest consternation held the assembly bound for some seconds. This was first broken by a long, low, expressive whistle from Mr Butts, but the remembrance of past mischance bridled his tongue.

"Do you think you could sleep here, my dear?" inquired Mr Margold from his snug nest in the corner.

The young lady almost screamed with horror. "Never mind, my darling," said the mamma, "I will sit in the rocking-chair by the fire, and you shall have plenty of room."

"Oh no, ma! that will never do—why can't the woman sit up? I dare say she's used to it." This was said in a loud whisper which reached everybody's ears—but no reply was made.

Mrs Margold and her daughter whispered together for some time further, and the result was that the lady drew one of the beds apart from the other, which movement caused Mrs Gaston's little girl to roll out upon the floor with a sad resounding thump and a piteous cry.

This proved the drop too many. Out spoke at last the poor half-blind husband and father. His patience was, as Mr Butts would say, "used up." "Neighbours," said he, "I don't know who you are, nor where you come from, and I didn't ask, for you were driven into my house by a storm. My family

were willing to accommodate you as far as they could ; such as we had, you were welcome to, but we are poor, and have not much to do with. Now, you haven't seemed to be satisfied with anything, and your behaviour has hurt my wife's feelings, and mine too. You think we are poor ignorant people, and so we are ; but you think we haven't feelings like other folks, and there you are mistaken. Now, the short and long of the matter is, that as the storm is over and the moon is up, it's my desire that you pick up your things and drive on to the next tavern, where you can call for what you like, and pay for what you get. I don't keep a tavern, though I'm always willin' to entertain a civil traveller as well as I can."

Hast thou not marked, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder-cloud has rolled—

I do not know whether this unexpected display of spirit in poor Mr Gaston was more like a thunder-clap or a deluge from a fire-engine. Like single-speech Hamilton, he was too wise to attempt to add anything to the effect it had produced. He waited in silence, but it was very resolute silence.

The Margolds were in a very pitiable perplexity. Miss Angelica, knowing that none of the trouble would come upon herself, was for being very spirited upon the occasion ; her papa, who had already begun to dream of Wall-street and Waverley-place, did hate to be recalled to the woods ; and Mrs Margold had no opinion of her own on this or any other occasion. Mr Gaston, seeing no demonstrations of retreat, went to Butts, who was or pretended to be asleep, and, shaking him by the shoulder, told him he was wanted to get up his horses.

"Get up the poor critters at this time o' night !" said he, rubbing his eyes ; "why ! what upon the livin' earth's the matter ? has the young woman got the high strikes ? "

"Your folks is a-goin' to try and mend their lodgin', that's all," replied the host, whose temper was a good deal moved. "They a'n't satisfied with the best we could do for 'em, and it's my desire that they should try the tavern at Jericho. It is but two miles, and you'll soon drive it."

"I'll be tipp'd if I drive it to-night though, uncle," replied the imperturbable Mr Butts ; "I don't budge a foot. I sha'n't do no sich nonsense. As for their trying the tavern at Jericho, the tavern's a deuced sight more likely to try *them*, as you know very well. Anyhow, this child don't stir."

"But if we are turned out of doors," said Mr Margold,

who aroused himself most unwillingly to the consciousness of a new cause of disturbance, "you are bound to——"

"I a'n't bound to drive nobody in the middle of the night," said Mr Butts, "so you don't try to suck me in there. But as to turning you out o' doors, this here chap a'n't the feller to turn any man out o' doors if he'll be civil. He's a little wrathly because your folks wa'n't contented with such as he had. I see he was a gettin' riled some, and I thought he'd bile over. You see that's the way with us western folks. If folks is saasy we walk right into 'em, like a thousand o' brick. He'll cool down agin if you jist pat him a little. He's got some grit, but he a'n't ugly. You only make your women-folks keep quiet—get a curb-bridle upon their tongues, and we'll do well enough."

Poor Mr Margold! here was a task! But sleep, though it makes us terribly cross when its own claims are interfered with, is a marvellous tranquillizer on all other subjects; and as Mr and Mrs Margold and Miss Angelica were all very, very weary—the latter of teasing her parents, the former of being teased—a truce was at length concluded by the intervention of Mr Butts, who acted the part of peace-maker, and gave sage advice to both parties.

Hospitality claimed as such is, I believe, *invariably* rendered among us, with a freedom worthy of Arcadia itself. It is only when there is evidently a supposition on the part of the guest that a poor man's house and family are necessarily at the service of anybody, for the sake of a few shillings, that our cherished independence is called into action. It is under such circumstances that those who are disposed to lord it in log-cabins discover that people who are not afraid to be poor can afford to be independent; and that uninvited guests must purchase civility by civility, or find themselves unwelcome in spite of money.

After much experience I can assert that I have never known or heard of an instance where those who have found it convenient to throw themselves on the kindness of a settler of any degree, have not been received with a frank welcome, which has appeared to me peculiarly admirable, because extended, in many cases, under circumstances of the greatest inconvenience. Nor have I ever known compensation demanded, whatever may have been the trouble given; and where it has been accepted at all, it has been only sufficient to repay actual cost, and that usually upon urgency.

Less than this I could not say in fairness to the justly

praised hospitality of the west; and I believe every reader will scarcely think our friend Gaston's apparent departure from the practice of the land needed this apology. It suggested itself unbidden, under the recollection of many a kindness received from strangers in the course of our numerous peregrinations.

We had agreed to make a twelve-mile stage before breakfast in company with the city people, whose way lay with ours so far. When the morning came and our mutual arrangements were to be made, the Margolds were so prodigiously sulky under the consciousness of last night's disagreeables, that I felt rather ashamed of the companionship, and would have preferred waiting to breakfast on sage-tea with poor Mrs Gaston, who was evidently very uncomfortable between the recollection of the affronts put upon herself, and the fear that her husband had gone too far in resenting them. The die was cast however, and we were obliged to seem to belong to the offending side, who carried their wounded dignity very high at parting. Mr Margold asked for Mr Gaston's "*bill*;" our host declined making any charge. Mr Margold insisted on his receiving payment, and finished by placing a bank-note on the table as he left the house without saying farewell, in which latter civility he was closely imitated by Mrs Margold and Miss Angelica.

"You didn't think I was *oncivil*, did ye?" said Gaston, somewhat anxiously, as we prepared to follow.

"Not in the least! You were quite right," was the very sincere reply, for we thought the poor blind man had borne more than enough.

"Well! you've had a pretty mean time, I reckon!" said Mr Butts, who stepped in to bid good-bye, just as we were departing; and I heard him add, "You larnt 'em a good lesson any how! I wouldn't ha' missed of it for a cow!"

Mr Margold was to be my husband's companion as far as Wellington, where we were to take our coffee, and I was exalted to the back seat of the jingling barouche, which I shared with Mrs Margold, leaving the front for Miss Angelica and her guitar.

The morning was a charming one, and a strong breeze from the west came as if on purpose to refresh the spirits and cool the temper of the party after the *contretemps* of the night. But this breeze, bearing on its fresh pinions some of the balmy moisture of last night's shower, blew Miss Angelica's long ringlets about most intolerably, and her little

forehead became quilted with very unbecoming wrinkles, when, as we drove through a narrow way where the bushes almost met above our heads, a provoking puff sent down a copious shower from the leaves, demolishing the small remnant of curl and the smaller remnant of patience, and the young lady scolded outright.

"I never *did* see such an odious country as this is!" she exclaimed; "it is impossible to look decent for an hour!"

"Well! one comfort is," said Mr Butts, consolingly, "that there a'n't many folks to see how bad you look, here in the woods! We a'n't used to seein' folks look dreadful slick nother—so it don't matter."

Double-distilled scorn curled Miss Margold's lip, and she maintained an indignant silence, as the only shield against the impertinence of the driver, who found consolation in an unceasing whistle. They had picked up this youth at a neighbouring village, supposing, from his pleasant countenance and obliging manner, that they had gained a treasure of civility. It had been at Miss Angelica's especial instance that the party had quitted the usual road and taken to the woods. She wished to be a little romantic, but she had not counted the cost. Butts was indeed all they had supposed from his address, smart, good-tempered and kind-hearted, yet, as we have seen, he was not the less lacking in the kind of knowledge which was requisite for the part he had undertaken. He had never lived with any but those who considered him quite equal to themselves. He was the son of a respectable farmer, whose ample lands would cut up well among his heirs; and when our friend Dan engaged to "drive team" for Mr Margold, he had no idea but that he was to be, to all intents and purposes, one of the party, saving and excepting his duty towards the horses, which he performed with scrupulous fidelity and no small skill. All this seemed so evident, that I almost wondered that Miss Margold could not have passed over his intrusiveness more good-humouredly, setting it to the account of sheer ignorance, and not evil intention. But unfortunately the young lady seemed to fear that her dignity would be irrecoverably compromised if she did not resent each and every instance of impertinence, and as Butts was one of those who cannot take the broadest hint—even an Irish one—he only talked the more, thinking he had not yet hit upon the right way to make himself agreeable.

By and by, finding it impossible to extort a reply from

the thready lips of the fair Angelica, he hailed a young man whom we overtook on the road.

"Hilloa! Steve! where are you a stavin' to? If you're for Wellington, scale up here and I'll give ye a ride. I swan! I'm as lonesome as a catamount! You won't have no objection, I suppose?" turning slightly to Mrs Margold. The lady did not forbid, and the traveller was soon on the box, much to Mr Butts's relief, as he now had an interlocutor.

"How do you stan' it now-a-days?" was the salutation of Mr Butts to his friend.

"Oh, so as to be a crawlin' most of the time. Be you be pretty hearty this summer?"

"Why, I'm middlin' tough. I manage to make pork ache when I get hold on't."

"Are you hired with any one now, or do you go your own hook?"

"I've been teamin' on't some for old Pendleton that built them mills at Wellington. I come on to drive a spell for this here old fellar" (jerking his thumb backward), "but I guess we shan't hitch long."

"Why not? Don't he pay?"

"Pay! Oh, no danger o' that! money's the thing he's got most of. But he wants a *servant*, and that, you know, Steve, is a berry that don't grow on these bushes."

"So he hired you for a servant, eh?" and at that thought "Steve" laughed loud and long.

"Why! a body would think you had found a haw-haw's nest with a te-he's eggs in't!" said Mr Butts, who seemed a little nettled by his friend's ridicule.

"Well, but it's too funny any how," was the rejoinder; and the two friends branched off into various discussions, and regaled each other with sundry pieces of intelligence referring to the fortunes and characters of the Toms, Dicks, and Harries of their acquaintance. I had become quite absorbed in these matters, and had fallen into a sort of doze, such as I suppose to be the only sleep needed by a French milliner, when I was aroused by a clear, manly voice, with just enough of a nasal twang to make me remember that I was still in the woods, singing an air that recalled "young Lochinvar," and which had doubtless originally been intended for none other. The words were those of a western song which refers to that interesting period in our local history—the admission of Michigan into the Union,—on which occasion our general govern-

ment decided that between the States at least, "might makes right."

Oh! dashing young Mick is the pride of the west!
Of all its bold hunters the boldest and best,
He has town-house and villa, and water-craft fair,
And parks full of rein-deer, enough and to spare.
Me has meadow and woodland, lake, river, and lick,
And prairie-land plenty, has dashing young Mick.

The ditty might have extended to the length of Chevy Chase for aught I can tell, in spite of many signs of indignation on the part of Mrs Margold and her daughter, if we had not at that moment come in sight of the tavern at Wellington, which caused Mr Butts to interrupt his vocal efforts, and give a rousing touch to his horses to insure "atrot for the avenue."

We found a decent inn and a tolerable breakfast, but the place itself was the image of desolation. It was one of those which had started into sudden life in speculating times, and the great mill, the great tavern, and various other abortions, had never known the luxury of a pane of glass or a paint-brush, nor did they bear marks of having at any time been occupied. A "variety store," offering for sale every possible article of merchandise, from lace gloves to goose-yokes,—ox-chains, tea-cups, boots and bonnets inclusive,—displayed its tempting sign; but the clerk sat smoking on the steps, and a few loungers around him looked like whiskey-customers only. There was a banking-house, of course; and (also of course) it was closed, though the sign still stared impudently at the cheated passenger. And this was "Wellington!" Hollow honour for "le vainqueur du vainqueur du monde!"

After breakfast—at which, by the by, Mr Butts and his friend filled high places,—we bade adieu to the Margolds, who were to regain the great road after a few miles of further travel, while we took to the woods again. Before we parted, however, Mr Butts sought occasion to call us to witness that he returned to Mr Margold the bank-note which that gentleman had deposited on Mr Gaston's table.

"You see, he a'n't no hand to make a fuss, Gaston a'n't; so he jist told me to give it to ye after you got away. And he said," added the agreeable youth with a smile, "that he'd rather you'd buy manners with it, if you could."

XVIII.

THE STAMPEDE.

PURSUING our journey on the rolling prairie, we had been about half a day out, and were beginning to lose sight of the lower ranges of hills, when we heard a deep rumbling, like heavy thunder or a distant earthquake, and our guide came to a sudden halt, exclaiming,

"Le diable!"

"Howly jabers! what is it now?" cried Teddy.

"Hist!" exclaimed Black George. "I'll be dog-gone ef I don't think we're chawed up this time, sure as sin!"

"What is it?" I echoed.

"Von grande stampede, by gar!" answered Pierre.

"Stampede of what, I pray?"

"Buffler," replied Black George, sententiously.

"What are they?"

"Yonder they is now—here-a-ways they soon will be;" and as he spoke, he pointed over the plain with his finger.

Following the direction with my eyes, I beheld in the distance a cloud of dust, which rolled upward like a morning fog, through which, and in which, I could occasionally catch a glimpse of the huge animals, as they bounded forward with railroad velocity.

"What is to be done?" I cried.

"Grin and bear it," responded the old trapper.

"But we shall be trodden to death. See! they are coming this way!"

"Can't die younger," was the cool rejoinder.

"But can we not fly?"

"Howly mother of Mary!" shouted Teddy, worked up to a keen pitch of excitement; "it's fly we must, sure, as if the divil was afther us, barring that our flying must be did on baasts as have no wings, now, but long legs, jist."

"What for you run, eh?" grinned the Frenchman. "Him catche you, by gar! just so easy as you catche him, von leetle, tam—vot you call him—musquito, eh?"

"It's no use o' showing them critters our backs," rejoined Black George.—"Heyar's what don't turn back on nothin' that's got hair."

"Well," continued I, "you may do as you please; but as for myself, I have no desire to stand in my tracks and die without an effort."

Saying this I wheeled my horse, and was just in the act of putting spurs to him, when Black George suddenly dashed up alongside and caught my bridle.

"See heyar, boy—don't go to runnin'—or you'll discomflumicate yourself 'oudaciously—you will, by ——! Eh, Pierre?"

"Certainment, by gar!" answered the guide; and then both burst into a hearty laugh.

"What do you mean?" cried I in astonishment, unable to comprehend their singular actions; and I turned to the other mountaineers, who were sitting quietly on their horses, and inquired if they did not think there was danger.

"Thar's al'ays danger," replied one, "in times like this; but thar's no safety in runnin'."

"For Heaven's sake, what are we to do, then? Stay here quietly and get run over?"

Black George gave a quiet laugh, and the Frenchman proceeded to take snuff. This was too much for my patience. I felt myself insulted, and jerking away my rein from the hand of the trapper, I exclaimed, indignantly,

"I do not stay here to be the butt of any party. Teddy, follow me!"

The next moment I was dashing over the prairie at the full speed of my horse, and the Irishman, to use a nautical phrase, close in my wake, whooping and shouting with delight at what he considered a narrow escape. The direction we had taken was the same as that pursued by the running buffalo; and we could only hope for ultimate safety by reaching some huge tree, rock, or other obstacle to their progress, in advance of them. How far we would have to run to accomplish this there was no telling; for as far as the eye could reach ahead of us, we saw nothing but the same monotonous, rolling plain. The herd, thundering on in our rear, was so numerous and broad, that an attempt to ride out of its way, by turning to the right or left, could not be thought of—as the velocity of the animals would be certain to bring a wing upon us, ere we could clear their lines. There was nothing for it, then, but a dead race; and I will be free to own, the thought of this fairly chilled my blood. Exposed as I had been to all kinds of danger, I had never felt more alarmed and depressed in spirits than now. What could my companions mean by their indifference and levity? Was

it possible that, having given themselves up for lost, the excitement had stupefied some, and turned the brains of others! Horrible thought! I shuddered, and turned on my horse to look back. There they stood dismounted, rifles in hand, and, just beyond them, the mighty host still booming forward. Poor fellows! all hope with them is over, I thought; and, with a sigh at their fate, I withdrew my gaze and urged on my steed.

On, on we sped, for a mile or more, when I ventured another look behind me. Judge of my surprise, on beholding a long line of buffalo to the right and left, rushing away in different directions; while directly before me nothing was visible but my friends, who, on perceiving me look back, made signs for me to halt and await them. I did so, and in a few minutes they came up laughing.

"Why, Bosson," said Black George, waggishly, "I hope as how you've run the skeer out o' ye by this time; for, I'll be dog-gone ef you can't travel a few, on pertikular occasions!"

"Oui, monsieur," added Pierre, "vous 'ave von le plus grande—vot you call him—locomotion, eh?"

"But how, in the name of all that is wonderful, did you escape?" rejoined I.

"Just as nateral as barkin' to a pup," answered Black George. "We didn't none of us hev no fear no time; and was only jest playin' possum, to see ef we could make your hair stand; never 'specting, though, you was a-goin' to put out and leave us."

"But pray tell me how you extricated yourselves?" said I, feeling rather crest-fallen at my recent unheroic display.

"Why jest as easy as shootin'—and jest that, hoss, and nothin' else."

"Explain yourself."

"Well, then, we kind o' waited till them critters got up, so as we could see thar peepers shine, and then we all burnt powder and tumbled over two or three leaders. This skeered them as was behind, and they jest sniffed, and snorted, and sot off ayther ways like darnation. It warnt anything wonderful—that warnt—and it 'ud been onnateral for 'em to done anything else."

"I say, your honour," rejoined Teddy, with a significant wink, "it's like, now, we've made jackasses o' ourselves, barring your honour."

"Very like," returned I, biting my lips with vexation, "all but the barring."

The truth is, I felt much as one caught in a mean act, and

I would have given no small sum to have had the joke on some one else. I detected many a quiet smile curling the lips of my companions, when they thought I did not notice them, and I knew by this they were laughing in their sleeves, as the saying is; but, being in my service, did not care to irritate my feelings by a more open display. It is very galling to a sensitive person to know he has made himself ridiculous, and is a private subject of jest with his inferiors. It is no use for one under such circumstances to fret, and foam, and show temper. No! such things only make the matter worse. The best way is to come out boldly, own to the joke, and join in the laugh. Acting upon this, I said:

"Friends, I have made a fool of myself—I am aware of it—and you are at liberty to enjoy the joke to its full extent. But, remember, you must not spread it! and, when we reach a station, consider me your debtor for a 'heavy wet' all round."

This proved a decided hit. All laughed freely at the time, and that was the last I heard of it, till I fulfilled my liquor pledge at Uintah Fort, when Black George ventured the toast, "Buffle and a run," which was followed by roars of mirth at my expense, and there the matter ended.

XIX.

WHO SHALL COOK FOR THE CAMP?

THE task of taking oxen on to the ground to the lumberer's camp every fall is very considerable, especially when we go far into the interior, as we frequently do nearly two hundred miles. This labour and expense are sometimes obviated by leaving them in the spring to shift for themselves in the wilderness and on the meadows, where they remain until autumn, when they are hunted up. During their wilderness exile they thrive finely, and, when found, appear very wild; yet wondering, they seem to look at us as though they had some lingering recollection of having seen us before. It is often very difficult to catch and yoke them; but, with all their wildness, they evidently show signs of pleasure in the recognition. When turned out in this way, however, instances have occurred when they have never again been seen

or heard of. In some cases they probably get mired and cast, and die; in others, they doubtless stray away, and fall a prey to bears and wolves. Bears as well as wolves have been known to attack oxen. An individual who owned a very fine "six-ox team" turned them into the woods to browse, in a new region of country. Late in the evening, his attention was arrested by the bellowing of one of them. It continued for an hour or two, then ceased altogether. The night was very dark, and, as the ox was supposed to be more than a mile distant, it was thought not advisable to venture in search of him until morning. As soon as daylight appeared, he started, in company with another man, to investigate the cause of the uproar. Passing on about a mile, he found one of his best oxen lying prostrate, and, on examination, there was found a hole eaten into the thickest part of his hind quarter nearly as large as a hat; not less than six or eight pounds of flesh were gone. He had bled profusely. The ground was torn up for rods around where the encounter occurred; the tracks indicated the assailant to be a very large bear, who had probably worried the ox out, and then satiated his ravenous appetite, feasting upon him while yet alive. A road was bushed out to the spot where the poor creature lay, and he was got upon a sled and hauled home by a yoke of his companions, where the wound was dressed. It never, however, entirely healed, though it was so far improved as to allow of his being fattened, after which he was slaughtered for food.

After a few days' respite, and as soon as a sufficient quantity of snow has fallen, we commence hauling the logs. As there are several departments of labour, each man is assigned to some one of them. In most cases, indeed, every hand is hired with the distinct understanding that he is to perform a particular part of the labour, and the wages differ accordingly, being regulated also by the ability with which they can severally fill those stations.

First, then, comes the "boss," or the principal in charge. Then the choppers, meaning those who select, fell, and cut the logs, one of whom is master chopper. Next the swampers, who cut and clear the roads through the forest to the fallen trees, one of whom is master swamper. Then comes the barker and loader, the man who hews off the bark from that part of the log which is to drag on the snow, and assists the teamster in loading. Then we have the captain of the goad, or teamster, to whom we have already alluded; and finally the cook, whose duty is too generally known to require

any particular description. Every crew is not supplied with the last important character; this deficiency, I believe, is much more common on the St Croix than on the Penobscot, where the mode of camp life and fare is much better attended to. When we have no person specially set apart to this work, the crew generally take turns, to do which there is an obligation imposed by usage and common consent on some rivers; and each man, therefore, must comply, or furnish a substitute by employing some one to act for him. In those instances, where no cook is provided, we take turns, a week at a time, or each man consents to perform some particular duty in cookery; for instance, one makes all the bread, another the tea and coffee, and so on through the routine of camp domesticism. A slight degree of rebellion sometimes manifests itself touching this business, especially before matters receive their regular winter mould. One refuses to cook, another says he "was hired to do something else," while another says, "I don't cook, any how." I recollect a pleasant occurrence of this kind, at least one rendered so by the clever management of an old man connected with the crew. They had returned to camp from the labours of the day, the fire was nearly out, and nothing prepared for supper. Alike fatigued and hungry, each refused in turn to discharge the duties of cook, and the gloomy prospect presented itself of a supperless night. "Uncle Nat," as we familiarly called him, was a "jolly old soul," the very personification of good-nature, corpulency, and quietude, possessing withal a good share of ingenious wit; and from his corpulency and asthmatical tendencies, reminding one of a small locomotive by the puffing and blowing consequent on physical exertion. Now how to settle this matter, and have even any number of volunteer cooks, at once occurred to "Uncle Nat." "Dear me" (his favourite expression), "what a time about cooking. Why, it is the easiest thing in nature to get supper. Now, boys, if you will wait upon me, I'll be cook." "Agreed! agreed!" was the ready response on all hands. This matter being settled, "Uncle Nat" very deliberately deposited himself on the "deacon seat," and commenced drilling the volunteer assistants. "Now, Richard, get a little wood and kindle up the fire. Isaac, step down to the brook and fetch a pail of water; and you, Mac, while the fire is getting under way, wash a few potatoes, and get them ready to put on when the pot boils." "Now, Jake, cut a few slices of pork," continued our chief cook, with much sangfroid, "and put it over the fire to fry." "But you was to get

supper, Uncle Nat." "Yes, I was to get supper, but you were to wait upon me," says he, casting a significant glance toward Tom, at the same time ordering him to make the dishes ready. Remonstrance was vain: they had agreed to wait upon him, if he would be cook. Everything was arranged, supper ready, and there still sat the old gentleman—hadn't stirred an inch. "Dear me," (deep breathing), "dear me," said Uncle Nat, "I have got supper, and 'twas one of the easiest things in the world." The "boys" are caught—it was a "good 'un;" and to the enjoyment of a relishable supper was added a hearty laugh. Uncle Nat's proposition passed into a by-word, and all, ever after, were ready to do anything, provided they could be "waited upon."

XX.

THE SWAMP DOCTOR'S FIRST CALL.

BEHOLD me, then, who late was a city physician of a week's duration, a veritable "Swamp Doctor," settled down quietly, far from the blandishments of fashionable life, and awaiting, as when in town, though with not half of my then anxiety, the "first call."

A veritable "swamp doctor," to whom French boots and broadcloth must be obsolete ideas; the honest squatters thinking—and with propriety too—that a doctor who could put broadcloth over their stiles, must have to charge very high to support such extravagance. A charge to which it is almost fatal for a doctor to lay himself liable.

A pair of coarse mud boots enclose my feet; copperas-coloured linsey pants occupy their proper position; a gaudy plaid vest with enormous jet buttons, blanket-coat and cap, complete the equipment of my outer man. Allow me to introduce you to my horse; for Charley occupies in my mind too large a space to be passed over silently when the "swamp doctor" is being described. Too poor to own but one, he has to perform the labour of several, which the fine blood that courses through his veins easily enables him to do; like his master, his external appearance is rather unprepossessing; but would that thy master, Charley, possessed thy integral virtues!

High-spirited art thou, old friend—for age is touching thee, Charles, though thou givest no indication of it, save in the lock of gray which overhangs thy flashing eyes. Tall in thy proportions, gaunt in thy outline, sorrel in thy hue, thou hast proved to me, Charles, that there is other friendship and companionship besides humankind; thou hast shared my lowly lot for many years, Charles—together we have passed the lonely night, lost in the swamp—breasted many an angry stream, and given light to many darksome hearts, when fever-stricken they awaited my coming, and heard thy joyous neigh and eager bound. I did not know thy good qualities, Charles, when first I bought thee, but the years that have wasted away have taught thy true worth, and made me respect thee as a man. But I must return, Charles, to when we first took up our home within the “swamp.”

My residence is as humble as my pretensions or my dress, being composed of split trees, and known in American parlance as a “log cabin.”

A lazy sluggish “*bayou*”—as all the small water-courses in this country are frenchifically termed—glorying in the name of the “Tensas,” runs, or rather creeps, by the door, before which—on the margin of the stream—stands one of those grand alluvial oaks which could canopy an army.

The day is rather sultry; a soft wind is moving its branches, on the topmost one of which is perched a mocking-bird! how wildly he carols, how blithesome is every movement! Happy fellow! the barn-yard, the ploughed ground, the berry-laden tree, all furnish him with food. Nature clothes him annually, and the leafy branch beneath shields him from the cold, when clouds and darkness gather around. Happy fellow! he can sing with a light heart; his wants are few and easily supplied. Would that the “swamp doctor” had as little care pressing upon him, that he might join you in your song; would that his necessities were as few and as readily provided for! Then too he could mock at the world, then too sing like thine a joyous strain; but poverty, youthfulness, the stranger’s want of loving sympathy, chill the rising ardour of his song, and fling him back upon the cold wave of the world.

But away, care, for the present! away, forebodings of the future! Be as in former days, Swamp Doctor, joyful at heart—thou hast sung in strains as wild as that winsome bird’s! Let the harmony that pervades the air paint for thee the future; and of the by-gones, “let the dead Past bury its dead!” But lo! here is a call:—

"Come quick, Mass' Doctor! ole missus got a fit!" aroused me from my poetical revery, and brought the invocation to Esculapius to an abrupt termination.

I was just apostrophizing "High Heaven" when the voice outspoke; laughing at the ludicrous transition of sounds and ideas, I rolled up my manuscript and turned to take a survey of the speaker.

He presented nothing remarkable in his appearance, being only a negro messenger, belonging to a small planter living at the extremity of what I regarded as my legitimate circuit of practice; from the appearance of the mule he bestrode, he had evidently ridden in great haste.

Perceiving me to be laughing, and not knowing of anything in his annunciation to create mirth, he thought I had not heard him when he first spoke, and therefore repeated, "Come quick, Mass' Doctor! ole missus got a fit, an' I 'spec is monstus low, for as I cum by de lot, I hear Mass' Bill holler to Mass' Bob, and tell him, arter he got dun knockin' de horns off de young bull, to cum in de house an' see his gran'-mammy die." But still I laughed on—there was such an odd mingling of poetry, Esculapius, missus, fit, Mass' Bob, and knocking the horn off the young bull, as to strike full my bump of the ludicrous, and the negro, sitting on his little crop-eared mule, gazed at me in perfect astonishment, as a monument of unfeelingness.

Suddenly the recollection that this was my "first call," came over and sobered me in a second; my profession, with all its sober realities and responsibilities, was again triumphant, and I stood a serious "swamp doctor."

Ordering a servant to catch my horse, I began to prepare for the ride, by questioning the negro as to the nature of the disease, age of the patient, and other circumstances of the case, that might enable me to carry medicines along suitable to the occasion, as my saddle-bags were of limited capacity, and none of the people kept medicines at home, except a few of the simplest nature.

"You say your mistress has fits? Does she have them often?" The object of my inquiries will be apparent to the professional reader.

"Not as I nose on, Mass' Doctor, although I did hearn her say when she lived in Georgy, she was monstus narvus-like at de full of de moon."

"How old is your mistress? do you know, boy?"

"How ole! why, Mass' Doctor, she's a bobbullushnary

suspensioner, an' her hare is grayer dan a 'possum's. Ole missus ole for a fak !”

“Has anything happened lately that could have given your mistress the fit ?”

“Nuffin’, Mass’ Doctor, as I nose on, ’cept pr’aps day ’fore yisterday night ole missus’ private jug guv out, an’ she tole wun of de boys to go in de smoke-house and draw him full ; de fule chile stuck de lite tu nere de baril, de whiskey kotch, an’ sich a ’sploshun never war herd as de ole smoke-house guvin’ up de goast !”

“Your old mistress drinks whiskey, then, and has been without any two days ?”

“Yes, Mass’ Doctor, an’ I ’spec it’s that what’s usen her up, for she’d sorter got ’customed to de ‘stranger.’”

I had learned enough of the case to give me a suspicion of the disease ; the verification must be deferred until I saw the patient.

She being very old, nervous, and excitable, accustomed to alcoholic stimulation, suddenly deprived of her usual beverage, and brought under the depressory influences of losing her smoke-house and barrel of whiskey, was sufficient cause to produce a case of disease formed by an amalgamation of *sub-hysteria* and *quasi delirium tremens* ; a not very flattering diagnosis, considered in a moral point of view, to the old lady, whose acquaintance I was yet to make. Knowing how much depended upon the success with which I treated my first cases, it was unnecessary to give me a serious and reflective air, that I should remember how much people judged from appearances, and that mine were anything but indicative of the doctor ; whiskers or beard had I none, and, even when wearing the most sober mask, a smile would lurk at the corner of my mouth, eager to expand into a laugh.

But I must start. Labelling a bottle of brandy “Arkansas Fitifuge,” I slipped it in my pocket, and, mounting my horse, set off upon the fulfilment of my “first call.”

When we reached the house—my horse reeking with sweat from the haste with which we had traversed the muddy roads—I introduced myself, as I had never seen one of the family before, nor they me—as Doctor Tensas, and required to be shown the patient. I saw from the countenance of the assembly, which was more numerous than I had expected to find, that they were disappointed in the appearance of the new doctor, and that my unstriking and youthful visage was working fatally against me. In fact, as I approached the

bed, which was surrounded with women, I heard one old crone remark, *sotto voce*,—"Blessed J——s! is that *thing* a doctor? why, his face's as smooth as an egg-shell, an' my son John 'peers a heap older than him, an' he's only been *pupped* ateen years; grashus nowe sich a young-lookin' critter as that shuddent gin me doctor's truck; he can't have 'sperience, but sens he's here we'll have to let him go on; half a 'pology is better an' no commiseration in an aggervated insult."

Paying no attention to her depreciatory remarks, but determined to show them that I knew a thing or two, I commenced examining the patient.

Had I not been prepared by the negro's description, I would have been surprised at the example of longevity in that insalubrious country which the invalid presented. Judging from external appearances, she must have had the opportunity of doing an immensity of talking in her time; her hair was whiter than the inside of a persimmon seed, and the skin upon her face resembled a piece of corrugated and smoky parchment, more than human cuticle; it clove tightly to the bones, bringing out all their prominences, and showing the course of the arteries and veins beneath; her mouth was partly open, and on looking in I saw not the vestige of a tooth; the great dentist, Time, had succeeded in extracting the last. She would lie very quietly in a dull comatose condition for a few moments, and then, giving a loud screech, attempt to rub her stomach against the rafters of the cabin, mumbling out something about "Whiskey spilt—smoke-house ruined—and General Jackson fit the Injuns—and she haddent the histericks!" requiring the united strength of several of the women to keep her on the bed.

The examination verified my suspicion as to the nature of the disease, but I had too much knowledge of human nature to give the least intimation to the females of my real opinion. I had been told by an old practitioner of medicine, "If you wish to ruin yourself in the estimation of your female patients, hint that the disease they are labouring under is connected with hysterics." What little knowledge I had acquired of the sex during my student life went to confirm his observations. But if the mere intimation of hysteria produced such an effect, what would the positive pronouncing that it was not only hysterics but a touch of drunken mania? I had not courage to calculate upon such a subject, but hastily dismissed it. Pronouncing that she had *fits*, sure enough, I commenced the treatment. Brandy and opium were the

remedies indicated ; I administered them freely at half-hour intervals, with marked benefit, and towards midnight she fell into a gentle slumber. As I heard her quiet breathing, and saw the rise and fall of her bosom in regular succession, indicating that the disease was yielding to my remedies, a gleam of pleasure shot over my face, and I felt happier by the bedside of that old drunken woman, in that lowly cabin, in that obscure swamp, than if the many voices of the city were shouting "laus" unto my name. I was taking the first round in the race between medicine and disease, and so far was leading my competitor.

It was now past midnight ; up to this time I had kept my place by the bedside of the patient, and began to get wearied. I could with safety transfer her care now to one of the old dames, and I determined to do so, and try and obtain some sleep. The house consisted of a double log cabin of small dimensions, a passage, the full depth of the house, running between the "pens." As sleep was absolutely required for the preservation of the patient, and the old dames who were gathered round the fire, discoursing of the marvels of their individual experience, bade fair to step over the bounds of proper modulation in their garrulity, I proposed, in such a way that there was no withstanding the appeal, that we should all, except the one nursing, adjourn to the other room. The old ladies acquiesced without a single demurrer, as they were all dying to have a talk with the "young doctor," who hitherto, absorbed in his patient, had shown but little communicativeness.

The male portion of the family had adjourned to the fodder-house to pass the night, so my once fair companions and self had the whole of the apartment to ourselves. Ascertaining by actual experiment that it was sufficiently removed by the passage to prevent ordinary conversation from being audible at the bedside of the invalid, the old ladies, despite my hints of "being very tired," "Really I am very sleepy," and "I wish I hadn't such a long ride to take to-morrow," commenced their attack in earnest, by opening a tremendous battery of small talk and queries upon me. The terrible breaches that it made had the effect of keeping *mine* on, and I surrendered at discretion to the ladies, *almost* wishing, I must confess, that they were a bevy of young damsels, instead of a set so antiquated that their only knowledge of love was in seeing their grand-children. Besides, they were only exacting from me the performance of one of the prescribed duties

of the country physician, performed by him from time immemorial; and why should they not exact it of me? The doctor of a country settlement was then—they have become so common now as to place it in the power of nearly every planter to own a physician, and consequently they attract little regard—a very important character in the community. Travelling about from house to house, he became the repository of all the news, scandal, and secrets of the neighbourhood, which he was expected to retail out as required for the model edification of the females of his “beat;” consequently, his coming was an event of great and exciting interest to the womenkind generally.

It is a trite observation, that “when you have rendered yourself popular with the wife, you are insured of the patronage of the husband;” apply it to the whole sex of women, and it still holds good—married or single they hold the men up, and, without their support, no physician can succeed. I had imagined, in my youthful simplicity, that when I entered the swamp I had left female curiosity—regarding it as the offspring of polished society—behind; but I found out my mistake, and, though I was very sleepy, I loved my profession too well not to desire to perfect myself in all the duties of the calling. I have often had a quiet laugh to myself, when I reflect upon the incidents of that night, and what a ludicrous appearance I must have presented to a non-participant, when, on a raw-hide-bottomed chair, I sat in that log cabin, directly in front of a cheerful fire—for, though spring, the nights were sufficiently cool to render a fire pleasant—the apex of a pyramid of old women, who stretched in two rows, three on each side, down to the jambs of the chimney.

There was *Miss* Pechum, and *Miss* Stivers, and *Miss* Limsey, on one side; and *Miss* Dims—who, unfortunately, as she informed me, had had her nose bit off by a wild hog—and *Miss* Ripson, and *Miss* Tillot, on the other. Six old women, with case-hardened tongues, and only *one* poor humble “swamp doctor,” whom the verdict of one, at first sight, had pronounced a *thing*, to talk to them all! Fearful odds I saw, and seeing trembled; for the fate of the adventurous Frenchman came fresh to my mind, who proposed, for a wager, to talk twelve hours with an old widow, and who at the expiration of the time was found dead, with the old lady whispering vainly “frog soup” in his ear. There it was one against one, here it was six *versus* one, and a small talker at that; but the moments were flying, no time was to be lost,

and we commenced. What marvellous stories I told them about things I had seen, and what wonderful recitals they gave me in return! How, first, I addressed my attention to one side of the pyramid, and then bestowed a commensurate intensity upon the other! How learnedly we discoursed upon "yarbs," and "kumfrey tea," and "sweet gum sav!" How readily we all acquiesced in the general correctness of the broken-nose lady's remark, "Bless the Lord! we must all die when our time kums;" and what a general smile—which I am certain, had it not been for the propinquity of the invalid, would have amounted to a laugh—went round the pyramid, when Miss Pechum, who talked through her nose, snuffled out a witticism of her youngest son, when he was a babe, in which the point of the joke lay in *bite*, or *right*, or *fight*, or some word of some such sound, but which the imperfection of her pronunciation somewhat obscured! How intently we all listened to Miss Stivers' ghost-story! what upholding of hands and lap-dropping of knitting, and exclamations of fear and horror and admiration, and "Blessed Master!" and "Lordy grashus!" and "Well, did you ever!" and "You don't say so!" and "Dear heart, do tell!" and what a universal sigh was heaved when the beautiful maid that was haunted by the ghost was found drowned in a large churn of buttermilk that her mother had set away for market next day! How profuse in my expressions of astonishment and admiration I was, when, after a long comparison of the relative sufferings of the two sexes, Miss Stivers—the lady who talked through her nose, in reply to Miss Dims, the lady who had no nose at all—declared that "Blessed Master per-mittin', arter all their talk 'bout women's sufferings, she must say that she thought men had the hardest of it!" How we debated "whether the 'hives' were catchin' or not;" and were perfectly unanimous in the conclusion that "Sheep safern" were wonderful "truck!"

Suddenly one of the small screech or horned owls, so common in the south and west, gave forth his discordant cry from a small tree, distant only a few feet from the house; instantaneously every voice was hushed, all the lower jaws of the old women dropped, every eye was dilated to its utmost capacity, till the whites looked like a circle of cream around a black bean, every forefinger was raised to command attention, and every head gave a commiserative shake, moderating gradually to a solemn settling. After a considerable pause, Miss Ripson broke the silence. "Poor creetur! she's gone,

doctor, the fitifuge can't cure her, she's knit her last pair of socks! Blessed Master! the *screech owl* is hollered, and she's bound to die, certin!" "Certin!" every voice belonging to the females responded, and every head, besides, nodded a mournful acquiescence to the melancholy decision.

Not thoroughly versed in the superstitions of the backwoods, I could not see what possible connection there could be between the screech of the owl and the fate of the patient. Desirous of information upon the subject, I broke my usual rule, never to acknowledge ignorance upon any matter to ladies—from the first eruption of Vesuvius to the composition of a plumptitudinizer—and therefore asked Miss Ripson to enlighten me.

I shall never forget the mingled look of astonishment and contempt that the old lady, to whom the query was propounded, cast upon me as she replied:—

"How dus screech owls hollerin' make sick people die? Blessed Master! you a doctor, and ax sich a question! How is ennything fotch 'bout 'cept by sines, an' awgrese, an' simbles, an' figurashuns, an' hiramglijptix, and sich like vareus wase that the Creator works out his desine to man's intimashun and expoundin'. Don't spose there's conjurashun an' majestix in the matter, for them's agin Scriptur; but this much I do no—I never sot up with a sick body, and heard a screech owl holler, or a dog howl, or a scratchin' agin the waul, but what they dide; ef they diddent then, they did 'fore long, which pruves that the sine war true! Blessed Master! what weke creeturs we is, sure enuf! I reculleck when I lived down to Bunkum County, North Carliny—Miss Dims, you node Miss Plyser, what lived down to Zion Spring?"—(Miss Dims, being the noseless lady, snuffled out that she did as well as one of her own children, as the families were monstrous familiar, and seed a heap of one another.) "Well, Miss Plyser war takin awfil sick arter etin a bate of cold fried collards—I alwase tole her cold fride collards warn't 'dapted to the delicases of her constytushun, but the poor crittur war indoost to them, and wuddent taik my device; an' it wood hav been a grate dele beter for her ef she had, as the sekil wil pruve; poor crittur! ef she oonly had, she mout bin a settin' here to-nite, fur her husband shortly arter sed, ef sarkumstancis had-dent altired his 'tarmynashun hedidn't no but wat he wood like to take a look at them Luzaanny botums, wair all you had to do to clar the land, war to cut down all the trese and wate fur the next overflow to wash them off; but pr'aps she wud-

dent nethur, for arter all he dident cum, an' you no she cud-dent kum 'cept with him 'ceptin' she dun like Lizzy Johnson's middle darter, Prinsanna, who left her husband in the state of Georgy, and kum to Luzaanny an' got married to a nother man, the pisen varmint, to do sich as that and her own laful husband, for I no that he borred a dollar of my sister Jane's sister to pay for the license and eatables for the crowd—but Blessed Master, where is I talking to!—well, as I sed, Miss Plyser made herself monstrous sick etin cold fride collards; wen I got where she was they had sent for the doctor, an' shortly arter I kum he cum, an' the fust thing he axed fur arter he got in the house war for a hanful of red pepper-pods—it war a monstrous fine time for pepper an other gardin truck that sesun—an' wen he got them he tuck a hanful of lobely an' mixt the pepper-pods with it, an' then he poured hot bilin' water over it, and made a strong decokshun. Jes as it was got reddy for 'ministering, but before it was guv, I heered a screech owl holler on the gable end of the cabin. I sed then as I say now, in the present case, that it war a sine and a forerunner that she was gwine to die, but the doctor, in spite of my 'swadements, gin her a tin cup of the pepper and lobely, but I nude it war no use—the screech owl had hollered, and she war called fur; an' jes to think of a nice young 'ooman like her, with the purtiest pair of twins in the world, and as much alike as two pese, only one had black hare and lite ise, an' the other had black ise and lite hare—bein' carrid to a grave by cold fride collards apeered a hard case, but the Lord is in the heavens an' he nose! Well, the first dose that he gin her didn't 'fect much, so he gin her another pint, an' then cummenst stemin' her, when the pirsprashun began to kum out, she sunk rite down, an' begun to siken awful! but it war too late, the screech owl had hollered, an' she dide, pooer creetur! the Lord be marsyful to her poor soul! But I sed from the fust she wood die. Doctor, weed better see how Miss Jimsey is; it's no use to waste the 'futifuge' on her, the screech owl has hollered, and she mus go though all the doctors of a king war here; poor creetur! she has lived a long time, an' I 'speck her Lord and Master wants her."

And thus saying, the old lady preceded the way to the sick room, myself and the five other old women bringing up the rear.

Somewhat, I thought, to the disappointment of the superstitious dames, we found the invalid still buried in a profound

slumber, her regular, placid breathing indicating that the proper functions of the system were being restored. I softly felt her pulse, and it, too, showed improvement. Leaving the room, we returned to the other cabin. I informed the family that she was much better, and if she did not have a return of the spasms by morning, and rested undisturbed in the mean time, that she would get well. But I saw that superstition had too deep a hold on their minds for my flattering opinion to receive their sanction. An incredulous shake of the head was nearly my only reply, except from the owl enthusiast.

"Doctor, you're mistaken, certin. The screech owl has hollered, and she is boun to die—it's a sure sign, and can't fail!"

I saw the uselessness of argument, and therefore did not attempt to show them how ridiculous, nay irreligious, it was to entertain such notions, willing that the termination of the case should be the reply.

It would require a ponderous tome to contain all that passed in conversation during our vigils that night. Morning broke, and I went softly in to see if my patient still slept. The noise I made in crossing the rough floor aroused her, and as I reached the bed-side, she half raised herself up, and to my great delight accosted me in her perfect senses.

"I s'pose, young man, you're a doctor, aint you?"

I assured her that her surmise was correct, and pressed her to cease talking and compose herself. She would not do it, however, but demanded to see the medicine I was giving her. I produced the Arkansas fitifuge, and as it was near the time that she should take a dose, I poured one out and gave it to her. Receiving it at first with evident disgust, with great reluctance she forced herself to drink a small quantity. I saw pleasure and surprise lighting up her countenance; she drank a little more—looked at me—took another sip—and then, as if to test it by the other senses, applied it to her nose, and shaking the glass applied it to her ear; all the results were satisfactory, and she drank it to the dregs without a murmur.

"Doctor," said she, "ef you're a mineral fissishun, and this truck has got calomy in it, you needn't be afeard of salavatin me, and stop givin' it, for I wont git mad ef my gums is a leetle touched!"

I assured her that the "fitifuge" was perfectly harmless.

"It's monstus pleasant truck, ennyhow! What did you say was the name of it?"

"Arkansas fitifuge, madam, one of the best medicaments

for spasmodic diseases that I have ever used. You were in fits last night when I arrived; but you see the medicine is effecting a cure, and you are now out of danger, although extreme quietude is highly necessary."

"Doctor, will you give me a leetle more of the truck? I declare it's monstrous pleasant. Doctor, I'm mity narvous, ginerally; don't you think I'd better take it pretty often through the day? Ef they'd sent for you sooner I woodent bin half as bad off. But, thank the Lord, you has proved a kapable fissishun, sent to me in the hour of need, an' I wont complane, but trust in a mersyful Saveyur!"

"How do you feel now, sister Jimsey? do you think you're looking up this morning?" was now asked by the lady of screech-owl memory.

"Oh, sister Ripson, thank the Lord, I do feel a power better this mornin', an' I think in the course of a day or two I will be able to get about agen."

"Well, mersyful Master, wonders will never stop! las nite I thot sure you cuddent stand it till mornin, speshully arter I heerd the screech owl holler! 'tis a mirrykul, sure, or else this is the wonderfulest doctor in creashun!"

"Did the screech owl holler mor'n wunst, sister Ripson?"

"No, he only screached wunst! Ef he'd hollered the second time, I'd defide all the doctors in the created wurd to 'ad cured you; the thing would have bin unpossible!"

Now as the aforesaid screech owl had actually screeched twice, I must have effected an impossibility in making the cure; but I was unwilling to disturb the old lady in her delusion, and therefore did not inform her of that which she would have heard herself, had she not been highly alarmed.

I directed the "fitifuge" to be given at regular intervals through the day; and then, amidst the blessings of the patient, the congratulations of the family for the wonderful cure I had effected, and their assurances of future patronage, took my departure for home, hearing, as I left the house, the same old lady who had underrated me at my entrance ejaculate, "Well, bless the Lord I didn't die last yere of the yellor janders, or I'd never lived to see with my own eyes a doctor who could cure a body arter the screech owl hollered!"

XXI.

HOW JACK WOOD GOT THIN.

It was during my autumnal trip of 1849, to the backwoods of Pennsylvania, that I became acquainted with the hero of this sketch. He was about thirty-five years old, six feet two in height, and stout in proportion—a noble specimen of a man, quite an Ajax in size and courage. His hair was long and black, and fell in a curly mass down his shoulders. He could walk as far, run as fast, and shoot or fight as well, as “the next one.”

He always prided himself on his hunting dress, and always looked neat in his person; his usual dress was a thick blanket hunting frock, of a dark brown colour, bound round the neck, skirt, and sleeves, with strips of beaver skin; his stout homespun breeches was met at the knees by heavy buck-skin leggings, his feet encased in strong Indian moccasins, and on his head he wore a sort of skull-cap of gray fox-skin, with the tail sewed on the left side, and hanging down on his shoulder. His breast was crossed by two fancy beaded belts of buck-skin, one supporting an ox-horn so white and transparent that the dark powder could be seen through it, the other holding a fancy leather scabbard, into which was thrust a heavy hunting-knife. His waist was encircled by a stout leather belt, in which he carried his bullets and caps, and through which was thrust his small but sharp tomahawk. His rifle was of the best make, and he prided himself in keeping it in good order.

Having run from home when but eighteen years of age, he worked his way out to the western country, where he adopted the hunter's life, and joined a roving band of half-Indians and half-whites, with whom he strolled till the breaking out of the Mexican war. He then joined a company of rangers, and fought under old Zack till the close of the war, and while there, displayed that courage and daring that has always marked his life.

The war over, he came to Philadelphia, and finding father and mother dead, and both sisters married, he went out west again, and commenced the roving life he so much liked. He wandered across the country till he reached the wilds of

Pennsylvania, and being much pleased with the scenery and hunting grounds, he built himself a cabin, and there it was I formed his acquaintance.

Pardon me, kind reader, for thus intruding on your good-nature, by entering on the biography of our hero, but it is a weak failing I have to eulogize my friends. But now for the story.

Jack's only partner of his joys and sorrows was his hound, for he hated all of the womankind.

Last fall I visited Jack's neighbourhood, and stopped at the same tavern as when I sojourned thither in '49, and after seeing my horse well taken care of, I entered the bar-room and lighted my cigar, thinking to have a smoke. Seated by the old-fashioned wood stove, I puffed away quite leisurely, thinking, as the old song says, of "The maid I left behind me," when in stalked the tallest, thinnest, and queerest specimen of a man I had ever seen. He was in full hunting rig, and dropping the butt of his rifle heavily on the floor, he leaned on the muzzle, and looked me full in the face. After he seemed fully satisfied, he walked towards me, and when within three feet of me, stopped and took another look; then seizing me by the hand, he shouted out—

"Harry Huntsman, as I'm a sinner! Old boy, how d'ye do?"

"Stranger," replied I, "you certainly have a little the advantage of me."

"Stranger!" roared he, "d—e if I don't like that! Call me a stranger! Old Jack Wood a stranger to you! Ha, ha, ha! capital joke that! You're the stranger!"

"Why, Jack, that aint you?" I foolishly asked.

"Yes, Harry, what's left of me—just about three-quarters of the original."

"Three-quarters!" replied I; "why, Jack, say one quarter, and you will be nearer the mark. But how came this great change?—been sick, or in love?"

"Love! No, sir-ee! As for sickness, I don't know what you mean; but the cause of my being so thin is"—

"What?" I eagerly asked.

"Panthers."

"Panthers," laughed I, "why, Jack, they didn't eat the best part of you away, did they?"

"No, worse than that, they scared it off. It makes my flesh crawl to think of it."

At this, my curiosity was rized, as the Yankee says, and I was anxious for particulars.

"Come, Jack, out with it, don't let me die in ignorance."

"Well, Harry, here goes; but first and foremost, you know I never was a coward; and never will be. All I want is fair play, but to cut a man's throat when he's asleep, can be done by any coward; just such a way them panthers served me. Three days after you left, last fall—that was the fifth of December, I believe"—

I nodded assent.

"Well, three days after you left, I found my fire-wood rather low, and came to the conclusion that I'd better cut a *few* before the heavy snows came—for I don't much fancy wood chopping in two feet of snow. So that morning, early, I shouldered my axe and put off for the swamp, about a mile to the right of my shanty—but you know where it is. I left everything at home—rifle, gun, and knife—as I never liked the idea of doing anything by half and half; when I want to hunt I hunt, and when I go to chop wood I go for that purpose only. Well, I reached the swamp and fell to work, and chopped for about four hours, when I thought a little rest and a pull at the flask would be just the thing. So down I sat on a log, and took one or two, or perhaps three, good pulls, but not more. Then lighting my pipe, I commenced to blow a cloud. Hardly had I gave three whiffs, when I heard a rustling motion among the low brush directly to my right; this was followed up by a low growl, and before I could get my axe out, up walked two great big panthers. Here, thinks I, for a run; so off I put, and the two devils right after me. Fright seemed to lend wings to my feet, for I scarcely touched the ground I ran over, and I knew I went over an amazing quantity in a remarkably short space of time. After a hard run I came to the conclusion to climb a tree, and rather foolishly selected a small one, when there were just as many large ones.

"On they bounded to the foot of the tree, and there they treed me, and such an infernal caterwauling, growling, and half-a-dozen other noises as they kept up, made my hair rise right up. They then jumped up at me, shaking the tree at every bound. I hallooed, whooped, screamed, and swore, but it was no use—there they were. Finally I suppose they got tired and hungry, so one went away while the other stopped to keep watch, and thus they relieved each other every now and then; and, Harry, I'll be shot if they didn't keep me up there four days.

"At last Bill Smith, happening to be running turkeys, came that way. I shouted as loud as I could, and he heard me, came

over and shot one of the varmints, and the other mizzled. He then helped me down, and when I touched the ground, I was just as thin as you see me now, and my hair nearly white. I had sweated and fretted myself all to nothing. But now I'm just as strong and hearty as ever, but get no fatter." Here he leaned over to me, and shouted out—"But, Harry, I'm down on all panthers since that day, and I don't intend to stop hunting them till every one of them is extinct."

XXII.

DICK HARLAN'S TENNESSEE FROLIC;
OR, A NOB DANCE.

You may talk of your bar hunts, and your deer hunts, and knottin' tigers' tails thru the bung holes of barrels, an' cock fitin', and all that; but if a regular-bilt frolic in the Nobs of "Old Knox" don't beat 'em all blind for fun, then I'm no judge of fun, that's all! I said *fun*, and I say it agin, from a *kiss* that cracks like a wagin-whip up to a *fite* that rouses up all out-doors—and as to laffin, why they *invented* laffin, and the *last* laff will be hearn at a Nob dance about three in the morning! I'm jest gettin' so I can ride arter the motions I made at one at Jo Spraggins's a few days ago.*

I'll *try* and tell you who Jo Spraggins is. He's a squire, a school comishoner, over-looker of a mile of Nob road *that leads towards Roody's still-house*,—a fiddler, a judge of a hoss, and a hoss himself! He can belt six shillins' worth of corn-juice at still-house rates and travel—can out-shute and out-out-lie any feller from the Smoky Mounting to Noxville, and, if they'll bar one feller in Nox, I'll say to the old Kaintuck Line! (I'm sorter feared of him, for they say that he lied a jackass to death in two hours!)—can make more spinin' wheels, kiss more spinners, thrash more wheat an' more men, than any one-eyed man I know on. He hates a circuit

* This sketch will doubtless appear exaggerated and over-drawn; it is, however, true to nature, and there are some places in the British provinces where similar scenes are still enacted, although old settlements before Tennessee was colonized at all.—*Edit.*

rider,* a nigger, and a shot gun—loves a woman, old sledge, and sin in eny shape. He lives in a log hous about ten yards squar; it has two rooms, one at the bottom an' one at the top of the ladder—has all out ove doors fur a yard, and all the south fur its occupants at times. He gives a frolic onst in three weeks in plowin' time, and one every Saturday-nite the balance of the year, and only axes a "fip" for a reel, and two "bits" fur what corn-juice you suck; he throws the galls in, and a bed too in the hay, if you git too hot to locomote. The supper is made up by the fellers; every one fetches sumthin'; sum a lick of meal, sum a middlin' of bacon, sum a hen, sum a possum, sum a punkin, sum a grab of taters, or a pocket-full of pease, or dried apples, an' sum only fetches a good appetite and a skin chock full of particular devilry, and if thars been a shutin' match for beef the day before, why a *leg* finds its way to Jo's sure, without eny help from the balance of the critter. He gives Jim Smith (the store-keeper over Bay's Mounting) *warnin* to fetch a skane of silk fur fiddle strings, and sum "Orleans" for sweetnin', or not to fetch himself; the silk and sugar has never failed to be thar yet. Jo then mounts Punkslinger bar backed, about three hours afore sun down, and gives all the galls *item*. He does this a letle of the slickest—jist rides past in a peart rack, singin',

"Oh, I met a frog, with a fiddle on his back,
A axin' his way to the fro-l-i-c-k?
Wha-a-he! wha he! wha he! wha ke he-ke-he!"

That's enuf! The galls nows *that* aint a jackass, so by sun-down they come pourin' out of the woods like pissants out of an old log when tother end's afire, jest "as fine as silk" and full of fun, fixed out in all sorts of fancy doins, from the broad-striped home-spun to the sunflower calico, with the thunder-and-lightnin' ground. As for silk, if one had a silk gown, she'd be too smart to wear it to Jo Spraggins's, fur if she did she'd go home in hir petticoate *sartin*, for the home-spun wud tare it off of hir quicker nor winkin'; and if the sunflowers didnt help the homespuns, they wouldn't do the silk eny good, so you see that silk is never ratlin about your ears at a Nob dance.

The sun had about sot afore I got the things fed an had Barkmill saddled (you'll larn directly why I call my pony Barkmill), but an owl couldent have cotch a rat afore I was in site of Jo's with my gall, Jule Sawyers, up behind me.

* A strolling Preacher.

She hugged me mity tite she was "*so feered of fallin off*" that drated pony." She said she didn't mind a fall, but it mought break hir leg, an then good-bye frolics—she'd be fit fur nuthin but to nuss brats ollers arterwards. I now hearn the fiddle ting-tong-ding-domb. The yard was full of fellers, and two tall fine-lookin galls was standin in the door, face to face, holdin up the door-posts with their backs, laffin, an castin sly looks into the house, an now an then kickin each other with their knees, an then the one kicked wud bow so perlite and quick at that, and then they'd laff agin. Jo was a standin in the hous helpin the galls to hold the facins up, an when they'd kick each other he'd wink at the fellers in the yard an grin. Jule, she bounced off just like a bag of wool-rolls, and I hitched my bark-machine up to a saplin that warn't skinned, so he'd git a craw-full of good fresh bark afore mornin. I giv Jule a kiss to sorter molify my natur an put her in heart like, and in we walked. "Hey! hurray!" said the boys; "My gracious!" said the galls, "if here aint Dick an Jule!" jist like we hadent been *rite thar* only last Saturday nite. "Well, I know we'll have reel now!" "Hurraw!—Go it while you're young!" "Hurraw for the brimstone kiln—every man praise his country!" "Clar the ring!" "Misses Spraggins, drive out these dratted tow-headed brats of yourn—give room!" "Who-oo-whoop! whar's the crock of bald-face, and that gourd of honey? Jim Smith, hand over that spoon." "You, Jake Snyder, don't holler so!" says the old 'oman—"why you are worse nor a painter." "Holler! why I was jist *whispering* to that gall—*who-a-whoopee!* now I'm beginning to *holler!* Did you hear *that*, Misses Spraggins, and be darned to your bar legs? You'd make a nice hempbrake, you would." "Come here, Suse Thompson, and let me pin your dress. Your back looks adzactly like a blaze on a white oak!" "My *back* aint nuffin to you, Mister Smarty!" "Bill Jones, quit a smashin that ar cat's tail!" "Well, let hir keep hir tail clar of my ant killers!" "Jim Clark has gone to the woods for fat pine, and Peggy Willet is along to take a lite for him—they've been gone a coon's age. Oh, here comes the lost 'babes in the wood,' and *no lite!*" "Whar's that lite! whar's that torch! I say, Peggy, whar *is* that bundle of lite wood?" "Why, I fell over a log an lost it, and we hunted clar to the foot of the holler for it, and never found it. It's no account, no how—nuthin but a little pine—who cares?" "Hello, thar, gin us 'Forked Deer,' old fiddle-teaser, or I'll give you forked litnin!

Ar you a goin to tum-tum all nite on that old pine box of a fiddle, *say*?" "Give him a soak at the crock and a lick at the patent bee-hive—it'll *ile* his elbows." "Misses Spraggins, you're a hoss! cook on, don't mind me—I didnt aim to slap *you*; it was Suze Winters I *wanted* to hit." "Yes, and it's well for your good looks that you didn't hit to hurt me, old feller!" "Turn over them rashes of bacon, they're a burnin!" "Mind your own business, Bob Proffit, I've cooked for frolicks afore you shed your petticoates—so jist hush, an talk to Marth Giffin! See! she is beckonin to you!" "I aint, marm! If he comes a near me I'll unjint his dratted neck! No sech fool that, when a gall puts hir arm round his neck, will break and run shall look at *me*, that's flat! Go an try Bet Holden!" "Thankee, marm, I don't take your leavins," says Bet, hir face lookin like a full cross between a gridiron and a steel-trap.

"Whoop! hurraw! Gether your galls for a break down! Give us 'Forked Deer!'" "No, give us 'Natchez-under-the-hill!'" "Oh, Shucks! give us 'Rocky Mounting,' or 'Misses McCloud!'" "'Misses McCloud' be darned, and 'Rocky Mounting' too! jist give us

"She woudent, and she coudent, and she didnt come at all!"

"Thar! that's it! Now make a brake! *Tang*! Thar is a brake—a string's gone!" "Thar'll be a head broke afore long!" "Giv him goss—no, give him a horn, and every time he stops repeat the dose, and nar another string 'ill brake to nite. Tink-tong! all rite! Now go it!" and if I know what *goin it* is, we *did* go it.

About midnite, Misses Spraggins sung out "Stop that ar dancin, and come and get your supper!" It was sot in the yard on a table made of forks stuck in the ground and plank of the stable loft, with cotton tablecloths. We had danced, kissed, and drank ourselves into a perfect thrashin-machine appetite, and the vittals *hid* themselves in a way quite alarmin to tavern-keepers. Jo sung out "Nives is scase, so give what thar is to the galls, an let the balance use thar fingers—they was invented afore nives, eny how. Now, gents, jist walk into the fat of this land. I'm sorter feerd the honey wont last till daybreak, but the liquor will, *I think*, so you men when you drink yourn, look to the galls fur sweetnin—let them have the honey—it belongs to them, naturally!" "Hurraw, my Jo! You know how to do things rite!"

"Well, I rayther think I do! I never was rong but onst in my life, an then I mistook a camp meetin for a political speechifyin, so I rid up an axed the speaker if he'd '*ever seed the Elephant?*' He said no, but he had seen a *grocery walk*, and he expected to see one *rot down* from its *totterin* looks, purty soon!' Thinks I, Jo, you're beat at your own game; I sorter felt mean, so I spurr'd and sot old Punkinslinger to cavortin like he was skeered, an I wheeled and twisted out of *that* crowd, and when I *did* git out of site, the way I did sail was a caution to turtles and all the other slow varmint."

Well, we danced and hurrawed without enything of *very* perticular interest to happen, till about three o'clock, when the darndest muss was kicked up you ever did see. Jim Smith sot down alongside of Bet Holden (the steel-trap gall), and jist gave her a bar fashion. She tuck it very kind till she seed Sam Henry a looking on from behind about a dozen galls, *then* she fell to kickin', *an* a hollerin', *an* a screetchin' like all rath. Sam he come up and told Jim to let Bet go! Jim told him to go to a far off countrie whar they give away brimstone and throw in the fire to burn it. Sam hit him strate atween the eyes, an after a few licks the fitin' *started*. Oh, hush! It makes my mouth water now to think what a beautiful row we had. One feller from Cady's Cove knocked a hole in the bottom of a fryin'-pan over Dan Turner's head, and left it a hangin' round his neck, the handle flyin' about like a long que, ane thar it hung till Jabe Thurman cut it off with a cold chissel next day! That was *his share*, fur that nite, sure. Another feller got knocked into a meal-barrel; he was as mealy as an Irish tater and as *hot* as hoss-radish; when he bursted the hoops and cum out he rared a few. Two fellers fit out of the door, down the hill, and into the creek, and thar ended it, in a quite way, all alone. A perfect mule from Stock Creek hit *me* a wipe with a pair of windin blades; he made kindlin-wood of them, an I lit on him. We had it head-and-tails fur a very long time, all over the house, but the truth must come and shame my kin, he warped me *nice*, so, jist to save his time, *I hollered!* The lickin' he gave me made me sorter oneasy and hostile like; it wakened my wolf wide awake, so I begin to look about for a man I *could* lick and *no mistake!* The little fiddler come a scrougin' past, holdin' his fiddle up over his head to keep it *in tune*, for the fitin' was gettin' tolerable brisk. You're the one, thinks I, and I jist grabbed the dough-tray and split it plump over his head! *He* rotted down, right thar, and I paddled his tother end with one of the pieces!—while I was a

molifyin' my feelings in that way, his gall slip'd up behind me and fetcht'd me a rake with the pot-hooks. Jule Sawyer was *thar*, and jist *anexed* to her rite off, and a mity nice fite it was. Jule striped and checked her face nice, like a partridge-net hung on a white fence. She hollered fur hir fiddler, but, oh, shaw! he coudent do hir a bit of good; he was too buisy a rubbin' first his broken head, and then his blistered extremities; so, when I thought Jule had given her a plenty, I pulled hir off, and put her in a good humour by givin' her soft sawder.

Well, I thought at last, if I had a drink I'd be *about done*, so I started for the creek; *and* the first thing I saw was more stars with my eyes shut than I ever did with them open. I looked around, and it was the little fiddler's *big brother*! I *knowed what it meant*, so we locked horns without a word, *thar* all alone, and I do think we fit an hour. At last some fellers hearn the jolts at the house, and they cum and *dug us out*, for we had fit into a hole whar a big pine stump had burnt out, and *thar* we was, up to our girths a peggin' away, face to face, and *no dodgin'*!

Well, it is new sixteen days since that fite, and last nite Jule picked gravels out of my knees as big as squirrel shot. Luck rayther run agin me that nite, fur I dident lick eny body but the fiddler, and had three fites—but Jule licked her gall, that's some comfort, and I suppose a feller can't *always* win! Arter my fite in the ground we made friends all round (except the fiddler—he's hot yet), and danced and liquored at the tail of every reel till sun up, when them that was sober enuff went home, and them that was *wounded* staid whar they fell. I was in the list of wounded, but could have got away if my bark-mill hadn't *ground* off the saplin and gone home without a parting word; so Dick and Jule had to ride "Shanks' mar," and a rite peart *four-legged* nag she is. She was *weak* in *two* of her legs, but tother two—oh, my stars and possum dogs! they make a man wink jist to look at 'em, and feel sorter like a June bug was crawlin' up his trowses, and the waistband too tite for it to git out. I'm agoin' to marry Jule, I swar I am, and *sich* a cross! Think of the locomotive and a cotton gin! Who! whoopee!

XXIII.

AN "AWFUL PLACE."

WE have never visited the town of Madison, Indiana, but we have an "awful" curiosity to do so, from the "awful" fact that we have never heard the place mentioned without the "awful" accompaniment of this adjective! Madison is an "awful place for revivals!" an "awful place for Mesmerism!" an "awful place for Mrs Nichols's poems!" an "awful place for politics!" and the following story will prove that it was, particularly, an "awful place for Jackson!"

It was during the weak struggle made to oppose General Jackson's re-election to the presidency, that, during his western round, it became known that he would "stop at Madison!" There was an "awful time," of course, but it happens, providentially, that in all awful times some awful genius or other arises to assume their direction, witness Cromwell, Napoleon, Washington, Marcy, &c., &c. Now, the directing spirit called forth to ride to glory on the neck of this emergency was a certain Col. *Dash*, of the "Madisonian (not Macedonian) Phalanx," and wrapped as he was in zeal and the "Phalanx" uniform, no one thought of opposing his arrangements.

The general was to arrive by steamboat, and anxiously had the whole town, hour after hour, listened for the gun, which, placed under the directions of Col. *Dash* himself, was to summon the citizens to the landing. It was during a "bad spell of weather," and, moreover, as the day wore on, more rain fell. The crowd dispersed, and, finally, night falling, the colonel himself retired from the mill-stone on which he had taken his stand, in order to keep out of the mud, and joined the amusements of a neighbouring ten-pin alley. Games were played, and "peach" and "old rye" had suffered "some," of course, and the colonel—his "Phalanx" coat and hat hanging against the wall—was just exulting in a "spare," when word came that the boat was in sight, and forth all rushed. It was quite dark, and still drizzling; the gun wouldn't "go off," of course, so, the town being built on three elevations, from the highest of which the landing is not visible, a messenger was despatched to spread the news, and everything was ready for a "hurrah for Jackson," as soon as the boat should touch.

The boat *did* touch ; there was a bonfire in the mud, *smoking* vigorously, by the cheering uncertainty of which the planks were shoved ashore, and Col. *Dash*, with the rest of the Macedo—beg pardon, Madisonians, rushed on board. There was “The *Gineral*,” sure enough, standing right in the middle of the cabin, his hat off, and his grizzly poll, with every inclination of the head brushing off swarms of flies—the boat a “light draught”—from the ceiling. The colonel introduced himself,—the colonel “shook hands ;” the colonel introduced the Phalanx, individually,—the Phalanx, individually, shook hands ; the colonel spoke,—the general replied ; the enthusiasm was tremendous, when suddenly the bell rang, and, to the consternation of the entire “Madisonian Phalanx,” it was announced that the boat, having put out some freight, was going right on, and, moreover, that the general did not intend to land !

“What ! *not* see *Madison*, gineral ?”

“*Not* see *Madison* !” exclaimed the Phalanx.

The “gineral” was distinctly given to understand that, if he *didn't* see Madison, Madison would, incontinently, precipitate itself from its three several platforms into the river and disappear, for ever, from the face of Indiana ; to avoid which sad calamity, and the captain consenting to wait, the “gineral” *did* forthwith—shielded by an umbrella, and conducted by the colonel—descend the steps, slide along the lower deck, venture upon the planks,—and finally step ashore, *up to his knees*, upon the soil that adored him !

The prospect here was certainly gratifying ; on one side the ten-pin alley was brilliantly illuminated, and the proprietor of it, moreover, stood in the door-way, out of the wet, discharging a pistol. On the other side was the smoke of the bonfire, and right in front, reflecting the *flicker*, whenever it could, stood a heap of mill-stones, towards which safer eminence the general proceeded ; and taking in at a *coup d'œil* the features of the scene, declared Madison to be “really a very pretty little town !”

“Why, general,” cried the colonel, “you ain't *begun* to see Madison yet !”

“Ain't *begun* to see it !” chorussed the Phalanx.

The general was now given to understand that he must mount two banks before the beauties of the place could at all strike him, and, furthermore, that, as in wet weather vehicles always *stuck fast*, it would be much better to proceed on foot. This movement, the general, “with great reluctance,” was com-

pelled to resist; and so, as by this time a considerable crowd of stragglers had tumbled down the hill, the anxious colonel arranged that the distinguished visitor should maintain his position on the mill-stone, and that the eager throng, after an individual "shake hands," should let him off!

The general nerved himself, amid a loud "hurrah," and the crowd "came on!" but here a sudden difficulty presented itself; the position which the old hero had taken was defended, on all sides except the front, by a *chevaux de frise* of lumber, interspersed by an occasional breastwork of barrels, and, consequently, the retiring and advancing *shakers* were walking over each other. The excitement was intense, the risk of a fight imminent, when the genius of the colonel again flashed forth.

"Stop!" cried he—there was a stop—"General! this ain't a going to do, no how! 'Tention, Phalanx and citizens! Back out, the *hull* of ye, from the mill-stone; form a ring round the fire, and the general will *walk round to you!*"

This proposition was received with a general cheer; the crowd plunged, slid, and staggered towards the faggots; the general was seized by the arm, dragged after them, and in a few minutes, after not more than two or three slips, there he stood, in the middle of the smoke, "surrounded by freemen!" as the colonel eloquently exclaimed, at the same time giving him a *sixth* shake, by way of showing the rest how to do it, and then taking a place himself in the ring.

There can be no doubt of the general's entire satisfaction with this arrangement, his experience among the Creeks and Seminoles having made him quite easy in swamp life. He approached the circle, extended his hand, a dozen others were thrust out to grasp it, but the colonel was before any of them, and, for the *seventh* time, the general was "welcomed to Madison!" Round went the visitor,—slip and shake,—“welcome to Madison,”—drizzle—slide. Suddenly the colonel shot across the circle,—took a place,—the revered hand was extended, and for the *eighth* time, and still more warmly, was it grasped with a "welcome to Madison!" Another fourth of the circle was measured, when the colonel again, like a shooting star, flashed across, and for the *ninth* time the general was met by his grasp and "welcomed." The general stopped short, the rain came down heavily, and a sudden whirl of smoke encircled him in its strangling embrace; as suddenly a flare of flame showed a darker tempest gathered round his brow; he "broke" for the boat, the colonel at his heels, and the crowd in consterna-

tion,—he reached the deck as the colonel had gained the middle of the plank,—“Gineral, *ain't* Madison *rather* a place?” bawled the latter.

“*Awful!* perfectly awful, by the Eternal!” muttered the former, not even turning at the cry which the colonel gave, as the end of the plank slipped, letting him souse into the river.

As we have said, we have an *awful* desire to visit Madison.

XXIV.

THE FEMALE COLLEGE.

I BEGIN to think edecation is the most surprisineest thing in the world—specially female edecation. If things goes on the way they is now, Mr Mountgomery ses we'll have a grate moral revolution—that the wimin will turn the world up-side down with ther smartness, and men what haint got no edecation won't stand no sort of chance with 'em. Sense I went to Macon to the 'zamination I've altered my notion 'bout this matter. I use to think human nater was jest like the yeath 'bout cultivation. Everybody knows thar's rich land, pore land what can be made tolerable good, and some 'bominable shaller, rollin' truck what all the manure in creation wouldn't make grow cow peas. Well, there's some men whose nateral smartness helps 'em along, first rate, some what takes a mighty site of skoolin', and some that all the edecation in the world wouldn't do no manner of good—they'd be nateral fools any way you could fix it. Ther minds is too shaller and rollin'; they haint got no foundation, and all the skoolin' you could put on 'em wouldn't stay no longer nor so much manure on the side of a red sandhill. Now, I used to think all the galls, or most of 'em, was jest this sort; but if anybody wants to be convinced that it's all a mistake 'bout galls not havin' as good sense as anybody else, jest let 'em go to the Macon College. I haint altered my notion 'bout the nater of human mind, but I've cum to the conclusion that ther is jest as good intellectual soil among the galls as among the boys; and I wouldn't be surprised if we *was* to have a “grate moral revolution,” shore enuff; and if we *was* to have Georgia Washingtons and Joana Adamases and Tobitha Jeffersons, what would do as much to mortalize ther sex and elevate the caracter of the female race,

as the heroes of the revolution did in our glorious independence war.

I had hearn so much about the Female College, and Miss Mary seemed to be so entirely tuck up with it when she was home, that I termined to go to the zamination and see what kind of place it was. Well, bein' as Miss Mary was thar, I put on my best clothes, and mounted Selim and set off for Macon. You know it's a dinged long ride from Pineville, and it tuck me most two days to git thar. When I got thar I put up at the Washington Hall—a monstrous fine tavern—whar ther was lots of old chaps from all parts of the State, what had cum down after ther daughters to the college. They put me in a room to sleep whar ther was two old codgers who was talkin' all nite 'bout anemel magnetism—a sort of fixen in which they sed they could carry a body all over the yeath, if they could jest git him to go to sleep. They talked a mighty site 'bout what some fellers had done—how they tuck one feller to heaven where he herd the angels singin' camp-meetin' tunes by the thousand, and how they tuck him to New York, whar he read the *Herald* 'fore it was printed, and seed Fanny Elsler dance the *Cracker-over-enney* as they call it, and show her gility to the people; then they tuck him to Constantinople, whar he seed lots of long-bearded chaps kissin' the galls. I never hern of sich things afore, and I couldn't go to sleep for fear they mought try some of ther projects with me. It was most day-light afore them old chaps got still 'bout edecation, modern science, and magnetism, and I didn't git more'n two hours' sleep, if I did that.

After breckfast in the mornin', which was monstrous good, considerin' they was town people, I tuck that street whar the houses has stood edgeways ever sense the grate Tippekenoo Convention—I 'spose they must been twisted round so to let the croud pass—and went up to the college on the hill. I tell you what it's a mighty stancheous looking bildin', and looks far off at a distance when you're gwine up to it. Well, when I got thar I found the zamination, and sich another lot of pretty galls aint to be seed often out of Georgia. Bless ther sweet little soles, thar they all sot on benches in one eend of the room, lookin' as smilin' and as innercent as if they never want agwine to brake nobody's hart; but I'm most certain, if I'd been in them old chaps' magnetism, I could have seed little Coopid thar with his bow and arrer, poppin' away like a Kentucky rifleman at a shootin' match. The room begun to get mighty full of people, and the president sed he hoped the

gentlemen would make room on the frunt benches for the ladys; but thar wasn't one of 'em moved. Bimeby he came back and sed he ment the *young* gentlemen, only the young gentlemen; then, if you could seen 'em scatter, you would thought ther wasn't no old men in the room—two or three old codjers with wigs on like to brake ther necks tryin' to jump over the backs of the benches, jest to be smart afore the galls. Ther was plenty of room for the ladys after that.

I sot on a back seat in the fust place, and kep lookin' out for Miss Mary; but ther was so many pretty creaturs thar that it was like lookin' for one perticeler star in the milky-way, or anywhar else, when they're all a shinin' ther best.

Bimeby the bell rung and the zamination commenced—and sich larnin' as we had thar don't grow in the piny-woods, I tell you. The master, a mighty sharp-lookin', hatchet-faced little man, with specks, talked to 'em jest like he thought they knowed everything, and he was termined to make 'em out with it. Sum of the galls looked kind o' skeer'd, and sum of 'm cryed a little; but you know galls cry so easy, it don't hurt 'em none.

After axin' 'em a heap o' questions 'bout rithmetic and grammar, and the like, ses he, "What's Mathew Matix?"

My hart began to kick when he mentioned that feller's name. I ris up and looked over a tall feller's shoulder, so I could see him if he was thar. Jest then I cotch'd Miss Mary's eye—she was lookin' her prettyest. I felt monstrous queer.

"Mathewmatix," ses she, "is the science of quantity—magnitude—number, ——," and she went on with a heap of larnin', but I couldn't hear no more; my face got as red as fire, and Miss Mary kind of laughed, rite in the middle of her speech.

"Go to the board," said the master—and maby she didn't shine when she walked up to a grate black board what stood in the corner, and tuck hold of a peace of chawk not half so white as her pretty little hand itself.

"Spose a cannon-ball is fired at the moon," ses the master, "how long would it take it to go thar?"

I reckon it would done you good to see her chawk slide over that board. She made figers faster than I could count, and the chawk rattled on the board like a flock of chickens pickin' corn off a clap-board; the whole board was kivered in no time. Bimeby ses she,

"One thousand one hundred and seventy-eight years, five

months, three weeks, four days, sixteen hours, twenty-three minutes, and forty-two seconds and a half!"

My lord! thinks I, how could she tell it so zactly to half a second?

When Miss Mary tuck her seat, the master called 'em up, one after tother, and axed 'em the hardest questions he could find in the book, but he couldn't stump 'em no how he could fix it. Whenever one class was dun, then one of the galls went to the pianner and played a tune or two—sumtimes they sung, and I never did hear of sich good musick. If Miss Mary hadn't been thar, I would fell in love with every one what sung; bless 'em, ther sweet voices went rite to my heart so. The zamination went on for three or four days, and I don't believe the galls told more'n half ther larnin' all the time. I never seed sich smart creeters; why, some of the leetle ones could tell how much three pounds and three-quarters of beef cum to at three-cents and three-quarters a pound, as quick as you could say Jack Robinson, and that's more'n sum old folks kin do. I never could do it. At nite they had a sing—all the galls tuck a part—and I haint got sum of them tunes out o' my hed yit. They sung the most diffikilt tunes jest like it cum naturel to 'em.

The last day was the interestinest ockasion of all. The graduation class red ther speeches and got ther deplomas, as they call 'em. I s'pose they're a sort of sertifikits of good behavier. Ther was twelve of 'em—all butiful as angels, and all dressed zactly alike in white. When they was dun readin' ther speeches, the president called 'em round him and made a speech to 'em. Pore dear creeturs, they stood thar and trembled like they was gwine to be married rite off; and when the old man told 'em they was now gwine to separate, and that they was like Tom Kimides—that love was like his lever, and the human hart was the fulcrum with which they could upset the world, they had to put ther hankerchers to ther faces to hide ther tears. A good many other folks was cryin', and I felt sort o' damp 'bout the eyes myself.

After it was all over, I started down to the tavern to git my horse, and was gwine along thinking of Miss Mary and the female college, and thankin' my stars that Mathew Matix and Nat. Filosofy wasn't no body to be afeared of, when what should I hear but a band o' music cumin up the hill. Bein' a military man myself, I was anxious to see that Macòn company what fit the Ingins so, and I hurried round the corner, when—grate Laws-a-massy!—I never seed jest sich a site in all my

born days. Hevens and yeath! thinks I, whar could they cum from?—they couldn't belong to no civilized nation, no how. Thar was Turks and Chinese, Arabs, Niggers, Hottentots, Ingins and Tartars—sum had faces as big as a cow, painted and fixed off all sorts o' fashons; one feller was ridin' on the back of his grand-mammy, another feller had a nose made out of a powder-horn; one chap was ridin' a big goose; all of 'em had weepons of all kinds and all shapes; sum of 'em on horses had everlastin' grate long swords as much as they could toat, and one feller had watermillions, cowcumpers, simblins, corn-gourds, and every other vegetable you could think of, all strung round him. They was marchin' rite up to the college, and so I felt a leetle larmed fear they was gwine to carry off the galls; so I turned back, and thinks I, I knows one leetle angel in perticuler what you won't git till you kill Majer Jones fust. Jest as I got close up to 'em a horse cum smashin' rite bang up to me, and I never cum so near drappin' in my tracks in my life—I never was so skeered afore. Ther was a chap on the horse with a grate long sharp-pinted dart in his hand, aimed rite at me! he had horns on his head, and looked jest like deth in the primer! I could see every bone in his body! I kind o' gasped for breth, and the infurnel thing rode off.

Up to the college all the galls was out on the portico hollerin and shoutin like blazes, and I run like thunder; but when I got up to 'em I found they was only laughin.

"My Lord!" ses I, "Miss Mary, aint you skeered?"

"Shaw, no, Majer," ses she, "it's only the fantastikils!"

"Fan-what-ikils?" ses I.

"The fantastikils."

"Oh!" ses I, for jest then I saw a grate long-legged feller among 'em with a fan in his hand, fannin a nigger woman what had fainted. The chap with the fan had a dough face on, that looked as pitiful as if all his relations was ded; and every time the nigger fainted he would ketch her in his arms and fan her, and look so sorry at her. The galls squeeled and laughed while the fantastikils marched round the college and then marched down to town agin. I soon follered, but I kep away from that chap on the horse. Down to the hall I paid my bill and cut out.

XXV.

LIFE IN MISSISSIPPI.

GETTING A RAILROAD SUBSCRIPTION.

HAVING seen nobody for thirty miles, night overtook me at the centre of Jones county. The road was only visible by the three "scores" on the trees, the grass growing on it rank and tall, like that in the adjacent woods. I was striking for the court house. I passed a small opening in which stood three rickety cabins, but they were untenanted. The road branched off into a dozen trails. Completely puzzled, I threw down the reins and left the matter to the instinct of my horse. He struck into one of the paths, and in fifteen minutes halted at a large farm house.

"Halloo!" cried I.

"It's halloo yourself," said the man in the gallery.

"How far to the court house?"

"Where are you from?" said the man.

"From Winchester."

"Then," said he, "the court house is behind, and you have come right by it there," pointing to the deserted cabins.

"Why, I saw nobody there."

"I reckon you didn't," said he. "There's a doggerly and a tavern twice a year, two days at a time, but they come with the court and go with the court."

"And the clerk and sheriff," said I, "where do they live?"

"Oh, the sheriff is clerk, and the clerk is squire, assessor, and tax collector in the bargain, and he lives away down on the Leaf."

"But the lots, my friend—who owns the lots?"

"The same individual that owns the best part of Jones county—the only landlord who never sues for rent—Uncle Sam."

"Well, sir, I am tired and hungry—can I stop with you to-night?"

"Light, stranger, light. Michael Anderson never shuts his door on man or beast."

Having carefully housed and fed my horse, I soon sat down

to a substantial supper of fried chickens and stewed venison, corn cake, peach cobbler, milk, butter and honey, served with a welcome and abundance peculiar to the pine woods. My host was a shrewd man, well to do in the world, preferring Jones county to any place this side of Paradise, having lived there twenty years without administering a dose of medicine, and had never been crossed but once during all that time. I was curious to know what had disturbed the serenity of such a life as his.

"Why, sir," said he, "I don't make a practice of talking about it, but being as you're a stranger, and I've taken a liking to you, I will narrate the circumstance. May be you've heard how the legislature chartered the Brandon bank, to build a railway through the pine woods away down the sea shore. In these parts, we go against banks—but roads sort of shuck our prejudices. Before the bank could be set agoing, the law required so much of the coin to be planked up. The managers all lived about Brandon, but the metal was mighty scarce, and the folks about there didn't have it, or they wouldn't trust 'em.

"They strung what little they had around the babies' necks, to cut their teeth with. Well, it got wind that I had some of the genuine, and the managers kept sending to me for it, offering to put me in the board. But I always answered that my money was safer in the old woman's stockings than in the bank. I heard nothing more about it for three months, when one night a big, likely-looking man rode up, and asked me for a shunk of fire.

"'Squire Anderson,' said he, 'my men have camped a quarter of a mile down there on the creek. We are surveying the railway to Mississippi city, but have come to a dead halt, because our line runs chuck up against your clearing, and we shall have to make a bend to get round to the court house.'

"The big man said this with so serious an air, and seemed so mystified at having to crook his line round my field, that his words went right through me. I invited him in. We talked it over, and emptied a bottle of liquor on the strength of it. Next morning we went down to the camp. He took his compass and run the line right spang up against my smoke house, which I had just finished after six months' labour.

"'Well,' says he, 'this is unlucky. The road will come out through your new smoke house; what's to be done?'

“ ‘You shall see,’ said I ; so calling my boys I ordered them to tear it down. Stranger, there lay the logs, the prettiest timber within fifty miles, all hewed by my own own hand. I have never had the heart to put them up again. Well, the big man never changed countenance. He ran on with his line, and the next day he came back on his return to Brandon. I was mightily lifted with the notion of the railroad and a stopping place right before my door. I entered six hundred and forty acres of land. My neighbours said we’d get the state-house here. The big man smiled and nodded ; he pointed out where the cars would stop, and where the governor would like to have a summer seat—and when he went, he carried away three thousand dollars for me, all in two-bit pieces and picayunes.”

“ Well, squire,” said I, “ I suppose you got the value of it ? ”

“ Stranger,” solemnly replied the squire, “ I never saw the big man afterwards ; I heard no more of the road. Here’s my smoke-house logs. My old woman’s got the empty stockings. Here’s what they sent me (a certificate on the Brandon bank stock) for the money, and if you’ve got a ten-dollar mint drop in your purse, I’m ready for a swap ! ”

XXVI.

SUNDAY AT THE CAMP.

If lumbermen do not love the return of the seventh day for its moral purposes, they welcome it for the rest it brings, and the opportunity it affords for various little matters of personal comfort which demand attention. On visiting our winter-quarters, one of the first things which might arrest attention, indicating a Sabbath in the logging-swamp, would be a long morning nap. Dismissing care, they court the gentle spell, until, wearied with the lengthened night, they rise, not, as on other mornings, when their hurrying feet brush the early frost as they pass to their work, while the lingering night casts back its wasting shadows upon their path. On the Sabbath morning they recline upon their boughy couches until the sun has travelled a long way upon his daily circuit.

Every one feels free to sleep, to lounge, or to do whatever

he may choose, with a moderate abatement in behalf of the teamster and cook, whose duties require some seasonable attention on all mornings. Breakfast over, each individual disposes of himself as best accords with inclination or interest. There are a few general duties which come round every Sabbath, which some, by turns, feel the responsibility of performing. For instance, every Sabbath it is customary to replenish the bed with a fresh coat of boughs from the neighbouring evergreens. Of the healthful and invigorating influence of this practice there is no doubt. Then follow the various little duties of a personal character. Our red flannel shirts are to be washed and mended, pants to be patched, mittens and socks to be repaired, boots to be tapped and greased, &c. Our clumsy fingers, especially if unused to the needle, make most ludicrous and unwoman-like business of patching up our torn garments. Letter-writing receives attention on this day, if at all, with no other than the deacon seat, perhaps, for a writing-desk, a sheet of soiled paper, ink dried and thick, or pale from freezing, and a pen made with a jack-knife; letters are dictated to a wife, it may be, or to a mother by some dutiful son, or to his lady-love by some young swamper. There are some recreations to relieve the monotony of a Sabbath in the wilderness. Sometimes a short excursion in search of spruce gum; for many a young urchin at home has had the promise of a good supply of this article, to be furnished on the return of the campers. Others go in pursuit of timber for axe-helves. As neither the white oak nor walnut grows in the latitude of pine forests in the eastern section of Maine, the white ash, rock maple, beech, and elm, and sometimes the hornbeam, are in general use. Others spend, it may be, a portion of the day in short timber-hunting excursions. Where the contiguity of encampments allows it, visits are exchanged among the denizens of the camps.

Formerly, when sable were more plenty, some one or more proprietors of a line of sable-traps would take the opportunity on the Sabbath to visit them, as time from the weekly employment could not be spared for this purpose. Such traps are very simple in their construction. Some thin, flat pieces of wood, cleft from the spruce or fir-tree, are driven into the ground, forming the outline of a small circle some nine inches in diameter, and about the same in height, with an opening of three or four inches on one side, over which is placed the trunk of a small tree some three inches through, running crosswise, and one end raised about four inches, supported by a standard spindle, to which a small piece of meat is fastened for bait. The

top of the whole is covered with light fir or spruce boughs, to prevent the sable from taking the bait from the top. Access to the bait is then had only by passing the head and shoulders into the little door or opening under the pole, when the slightest nibbling at the spindle will bring down the dead-fall and entrap them. These traps occur every few rods, and thus a line or circuit is formed for several miles.

Wild cats sometimes take the business of tending these sable traps, in which case they tear them to pieces and devour the bait. One such animal will occasionally break up an entire line, and blast the hopes of the hunter till captured himself.

Although, when circumstances favour it, some portion of Saturday is devoted to hauling up camp wood, yet the practice of devoting a few hours of the concluding part of the Sabbath is not unfrequent. Upon the whole, we conclude that, notwithstanding the necessity of rest and recreation, and the necessary attentions to personal conveniences which the seventh day affords, the season usually wears away rather heavily than otherwise, and Monday morning, with its cheerful employments, brings not an unwelcome change. The pleasures of a forest life are, with lumbermen, found rather in the labour performed than the recreations enjoyed. Suspension from labour, without the pleasant relief which home privileges afford, leaves a vacancy of feeling not altogether free from *ennui*. The little domestic duties claiming attention—unpleasant, as indeed they are unnatural to the coarser sex—remind them strongly of the absence of *woman*, without whose amiable presence, society, and services, man cannot enjoy his quota of earthly bliss.

A tramp after deer and moose is sometimes taken. We often disturb them in penetrating the deep forests for timber. In such cases they always remove to some more sequestered place, and post themselves for winter-quarters again, where we sometimes follow and take them when the condition of the snow renders their flight tardy and difficult. In the summer they roam at large through the forests and on the meadows, where they may be often seen feeding as we pass up the rivers; but in winter they confine themselves to much smaller limits, where they remain during the greater portion of the season.

The moose is the largest species of deer found in the New-England forest. Their size varies from that of a large pony to the full-grown horse. They have large branching antlers, which grow and are shed every season.

The taking of moose is sometimes quite hazardous. The most favourable time for hunting them is towards spring, when the snow is deep, and when the warmth of midday melts the surface, and the cold nights freeze a crust, which greatly embarrasses the moose and deer in their flight.

"One pleasant morning, six of us started with the intention of taking deer; we had a gun and a large dog. Fatigued, at length, with several hours' travel, and meeting with no success, we concluded to give it up and return to camp late in the afternoon. Having been very intent in our search for game, we had taken little notice of the various courses which we had travelled, and, when the purpose was formed of returning, we found, much to our discomfort, that we were altogether in doubt as to the direction proper to be pursued. However, we were not without our opinions on the subject, though, unfortunately, these opinions differed. We finally separated into two parties, four supposing that the camp lay in a particular direction, while two of us entertained nearly opposite views. The gun was retained by the four, while the dog followed myself and comrade. We had not separated more than five minutes, when the dog started two fine moose. The other party, being within hail, soon joined us in the pursuit.

"As the snow was deep, and crusted sufficiently hard to bear us upon snow-shoes, while the moose broke through at every leap, we were soon sufficiently near them to allow a good shot. One of the men approached within a few yards of the hindmost, and fired. The ball took effect, but did not stop him. Still pursuing, another ball was lodged in his body, when he turned at bay. It was now our turn to retreat; but, after making a few bounds towards us, he turned and fled again, when we again came up to the charge. I took the gun this time, and approached within fifteen feet of him, and fired. He dropped instantly upon the snow. Supposing him dead, we left the spot and pursued the other with all possible dispatch, for there was not a moment to lose, as the fugitive, alarmed by the report of the gun, was redoubling his exertions to effect his escape. The dog, however, soon came upon him and retarded his flight. Emboldened in his successful encounter with the other, Rover dashed incautiously upon him, but nearly paid the forfeit of his life. The moose gave him a tremendous blow with one of his sharp hoofs, which made him cry out till the woods echoed with his piteous howl. In vain did we try to induce him to renew the encounter. His passion for the chase seemed effectually cooled; so we were obliged to abandon the

pursuit, and the more readily, as the day was now quite spent. We returned to dress the one we had shot, but were astonished, on arriving at the place where we left him, to find that he, too, had made his escape. Tracking him by a trail of blood, which appeared to spirt out at every leap he made, we soon came up with him, and fired again. The ball hit, but only to enrage him the more. Five additional bullets were lodged in his perforated body, now making in all nine. Having but one shot more, we desired to make it count effectively; so, taking the gun, I approached very near upon one side, and fired at his head. The ball passed directly into one eye and out at the other, thus rendering him completely blind. The last shot caused him to jump and plunge tremendously. He now became furious, and, guided by the sound of our footsteps, would dart at us like a catamount whenever we approached him. We had no axe to strike him down, or to cut clubs with which to dispatch him. We were at a stand what to do. We tried first to entangle him in the deep snow by approaching him, and thus induce him to spring out of the beaten into the untrodden snow; but the moment he found himself out, he worked back directly into the beaten path again.

“Our feelings became very uncomfortable, and now from pity we desired to put an end to his sufferings. To see his noble struggle for life, with nine bullets in him, and blind, inspired a painful regard towards him. What to do we knew not. It was really unsafe to approach him so as to cut his throat. We could neither entangle him in the snow, nor bring him down with the small sticks we had cut with our jack-knives. At length we hit upon the following expedient: obtaining a long stiff pole, one end of it was gently placed against his side. We found he leaned against it, and the harder we pushed the more he opposed. Uniting our strength, we pressed it as powerfully as we were capable; he resisted with equal strength. While thus pressing, we suddenly gave way, when he fell flat upon his side. Before he had time to recover, we sprang upon him, and with a knife severed the jugular vein, when he yielded to his fate. It was nearly two hours from the commencement of our last encounter before we dispatched him. Leaving him for the night, we returned to camp, quite overcome with hunger and fatigue.

“Next morning we went out to bring in our prize. We found the other moose affectionately standing over the dead carcass of her slaughtered companion. Manifesting much reluctance to flee, she permitted our approach sufficiently

near to afford a good shot, which we were not unwilling to improve; so, raising the fatal instrument to my cheek, I let go. She fell on the spot, and was soon dressed with the other. We took the carcasses into camp, and, after reserving what we wished for our own use, sent the remainder down river to our friends."

The "bull moose" is a formidable foe when he "gets his dander up," and specially so at particular seasons of the year; then, unprovoked, they will make war on man, betraying none of that shrinking timidity so characteristic of the *cervine genus*. A hunter, who used to put up occasionally over night at our camp, entertained us with the following singular adventure. "Once," said he, "while out on a hunting excursion, I was pursued by a 'bull moose,' during that period when their jealousy is in full operation in behalf of the female. He approached me with his muscular neck curved, and head to the ground, in a manner not dissimilar to the attitude assumed by horned cattle when about to encounter each other. Just as he was about to make a pass at me, I sprang suddenly between his wide-spreading antlers, astride his neck. Dexterously turning round, I seized him by the horns, and, locking my feet together under his neck, I clung to him like a sloth. With a mixture of rage and terror, he dashed wildly about, endeavouring to dislodge me; but, as my life depended upon maintaining my position, I clung to him with a corresponding desperation. After making a few ineffectual attempts to disengage me, he threw out his nose, and, laying his antlers back upon his shoulders, which formed a screen for my defence, he sprang forward into a furious run, still bearing me upon his neck. Now penetrating dense thickets, then leaping high "windfalls," and struggling through swamp-mires, he finally fell through exhaustion, after carrying me about three miles. Improving the opportunity, I drew my hunter's knife from its sheath, and instantly buried it in his neck, cutting the jugular vein, which put a speedy termination to the contest and the flight."

XXVII.

A NIGHT'S ADVENTURE IN THE FLORIDA SWAMP.

NEAR the close of the year '37, as I was quietly strolling on the banks of the Susquehanna, the idea came into my cranium of taking a trip to Florida, wishing to see the land of which I had heard and read so much. A day sufficed to prepare me for the journey. A small travelling trunk was packed, containing nearly all my worldly goods, and shouldering my rifle I was soon *en route* for the land of promise. It was in the height of the famous Seminole war, but I had not the slightest idea of volunteering in Uncle Sam's service, merely going on my own hook, more for hunting than fighting.

In due course of time I arrived at Pensacola, from whence I proceeded direct to Florida *city*, which I found consisted of a very inconsiderable number of huts. I had been at the settlement but a few days, when I received an invitation from one of my new acquaintances to accompany him in a ride some forty miles across the country, where he was going on business, which I of course very gladly accepted, and at two o'clock that afternoon we were on our way well mounted and armed. My companion was a wild free-and-easy sort of chap, who had the reputation of being the best shot in the clearing, could run down an elk or wild Indian, and was always counted "some in a bar fight,"—he answered to the name of Joe Peters, though more familiarly called "Crazy Joe."

We had started late, both to avoid the heat of the day and enjoy the cool of the evening. Our route was a pleasant one, leading through a fine country heavily stocked with timber, and sprinkled with occasional swamps and thickets. We had got over about two-thirds of our journey without starting game of any kind, when up went a bevy of some half-dozen turkeys; some stopped in the trees, and we succeeded in bagging a brace of them, and then continued leisurely on, my companion spinning yarns of border life in general, and turkey shooting in particular, and myself an attentive listener, when we were suddenly awakened to a sense of our situation by the heavy report of a musket not twenty yards distant, just within the confines of a thick swamp, and at the same

moment an arrow (aimed with more precision than the bullet) scraped a very familiar acquaintance with my arm. Nothing could be seen of the lurking foe, completely hidden as he was by the dense bushes. Our horses were, however, brought to a halt, and throwing ourselves from the saddle, we were on the point of entering the swamp to dislodge the red-skins (for such they undoubtedly were, though at that time it was generally believed there were none in the neighbourhood), when Joe stopped short, and turning to me, said, "I guess upon the whole the shortest way out of this scrape is the best, for there's no telling how many of the red devils there may be, and they will likely lead us into the swamp, and before we get back steal our horses."

This would have been a decided fix, to be left without horses in such a place, and leaping into the saddle, we galloped off at a quick pace; not being very anxious to set ourselves up as a mark to be shot at, without the possibility of returning the compliment. But we had not proceeded fifty rods when bang, bang, cracked half-a-dozen muskets, the bullets whizzing past our ears quite unceremoniously, but unluckily with more effect than the first, Joe having his thigh badly scratched by one, and my horse receiving another in the shoulder, but not being so badly wounded but that he sprang forward with a limping gait, which I was not at all anxious to restrain, and we kept on as fast as could be expected under the circumstances. At the instant of the fire we heard a whoop, and the cracking of bushes, and the next moment some dozen red-skins burst from the swamp, and commenced chase. They were within metal range, and turning in the saddle, our rifles were immediately levelled, and with a simultaneous crack, two of the rascals tumbled into the bushes, performing various feats of "ground and lofty tumbling." Such a hideous yelling as now burst forth from their enraged companions is past description. I can fancy it ringing in my ears at the present moment. Had a regiment of Satan's imps been let loose from the infernal regions on our heels, they could not have caused a more desperate effort on the part of the poor animal whom I bestrode to increase the distance between himself and his persecutors. Here was an exhibition of the "turf" not to be witnessed every day. But it was a vain effort, he made a few long strides and then fell to the ground. Joe, however, was at my side, and giving me his hand, I leaped on behind him just as three of the Indians, who were in advance of the rest, fired,

two with muskets, and the other with an arrow. The bullets, as in nine cases out of ten, were harmless, but the arrow cut a deep furrow in the animal's quarter, and somewhat to my inconvenience lodging in my thigh, from which it was easily extracted, having spent its force on the poor horse, who was now so effectually blown, what with a long journey and a hard chase, that the best he could do was to keep our distance good. This state of things did not last long. The Indians, who were fresh from the chase, gained perceptibly on us, and as they drew near their infernal yells seemed more furious than ever, and each was apparently doing his best to be "in at the death." Joe looked over his shoulder and remarked, "Wouldn't them are red devils like to get us into their clutches though!" "Perhaps they will yet," I replied, "our horse can't stand it much longer." "No, I'll be blowed if they do," he said, with a look of defiance; "we'll take to the swamp when old gray gives out, and if there's a mother's son among 'em as can catch us thar, then he's welcome to my scalp, that's all." As he finished this sentence, a volley of arrows flew into the air, two of which struck our already broken-down horse, and after a few more leaps the poor animal, unable to carry his double load further, fell to the ground.

Seizing Joe by the shoulders, and assisting him from beneath the horse, we made tracks for the swamp, and were soon out of sight of our pursuers, who however came in close to our heels. We skulked low and made what progress we could into the swamp, keeping ahead of the red-skins for about half a mile, when finding they kept close on our rear, notwithstanding the frequent turns and twists we made, for they seemed to keep track equal to blood-hounds, we ventured to skulk under a thick clump of bushes. It was now getting quite dark, and two of the rascals passed within a dozen yards of us, and were soon out of hearing, for, as you might suppose, on entering the swamp their yelling was all over, and they commenced the game of still hunting.

After keeping quiet a few minutes, we reloaded our rifles, and commenced making the best of our way out of the swamp; but after toiling through the mud and briars more than an hour, we were brought to a dead halt by a deep pool of water. How long or broad it might be we knew not, it being altogether too dark to see. We now came to the conclusion that we were not getting out of our troubles quite as speedily as was desirable. The truth suddenly flashed

before our mind. We were lost in the depths of an almost impenetrable swamp. To go on was impossible, to retrace our steps equally so. There was no alternative but to bivouac where we were for the night, and when daylight appeared next morning, find our way out.

It was at least three shades darker than midnight in a coal pit, and such a concert of vocal music I never before witnessed, and trust I never shall again, under like circumstances. It seemed as if all God's creation was represented, from the 'annoying buzz of the musquito to the melodious notes of alligators and panthers, who made night hideous with their discordant revelries. We had most certainly witnessed a speedy transition from the land of promise to the land of varmints, and to add to the comfort of our situation, our lower man had been drenched to the skin with mud and water, which was not very comfortable, as the night was unusually chilly; and to build a fire was unsafe, in the neighbourhood of our Indian enemies.

Finding we must make ourselves as comfortable as possible where we were, Joe drew forth a huge pocket pistol, which had been well charged when we started, but had evidently suffered severely from a leak in the neighbourhood of the cork; however, there was enough left for all practicable purposes, and placing the muzzle to his mouth, he took a stiff charge, and then passed it over to me; of course, I did it justice. We now concluded that one should watch while the other slept, and *vice versa*, I volunteering to stand the first watch, not feeling much like sleep. Joe, however, was used to such things, and in less than ten minutes was performing bass, in beautiful accompaniment with the *other* varmints. At length drowsiness got the better of my judgment, and I fell asleep. How long I slept I know not, but when I awoke my confused brain was troubled with a vague dream about panther hunting. I rose to my feet and began to rub open my eyes, and as I did so, heard the unmistakable voice of a panther within a few yards of us. I instinctively grasped my rifle and looked in the direction of the sound; my eyes were now opened without difficulty, and I beheld a pair of the largest, brightest eyes that ever were seen in a dark night. They appeared with all the brilliancy of gas lights, though unfortunately without lighting up the surrounding darkness. In an instant the rifle was at my shoulder; it was impossible to see the barrel, much less the sight, but being accustomed to its use, I levelled for one of his glaring eye-

balls and pulled. A half-smothered howl followed the sharp crack of the rifle, and all was over. The sudden report, however, disturbed the fairy dreams of Joe, and springing to his feet with one bound, he lit up to his armpits in a mud hole.

"Where's the red devils?—look out for my rifle—bear a hand and help a fellow out of this d——d mud hole—cuss the Injins," he repeated in hurried accents.

Notwithstanding his predicament, I could not withhold a hearty laugh at his expense, as I assured him it was nothing but a painter which had caused all the muss.

"It's the first time one ever skeered me," he replied. "I wouldn't have got into this scrape for a dozen painters."

Feeling ourselves quite refreshed, we sat down to wait for daylight, which at length began to show its dim visage: The noise and din about us gradually died away (though I almost fancy I can hear it yet), and the uncertain gray of morning apparently merged into daylight, though a heavy mist, and the dense foliage of the trees, effectually obscured the sun's rays, and gave it the appearance of twilight. Cutting the tail off the panther and tying it in my belt, as a trophy, we proceeded to find our way to dry land, which we reached after a toilsome march of about two miles, and arrived at the end of our journey about noon, without further molestation, though with the loss of two fine horses, to say nothing of the brace of turkeys; probably both contributed towards a meal for a hungry pack of wolves or flock of turkey-buzzards.

XXVIII.

A RIDE AND WALK AFTER CHURCH.

SUM times I think I *is* the onluckiest man in the world. Everlastingly ther's sum sarned thing happenin to me, in spite of all I kin do. Sense I cum back from Macon, and my account of the zamination's ben red by most everybody bout here, I blieve my popilarity's ris considerable. Miss Mary said she wouldn't be sprised much if I turned out a perfect Lord Birum, and mortalized all the ladys of my quaintance. She was mighty pround of what I said about her buty and larnin, but she ses I didn't give the right answer to the sum

bout the cannon ball and the moon ; but that's no matter now. I want to tell you bout a scrape I got in tother day, as I knows you never hearn of jest sich a catasterfy before.

Last Sunday, Miss Mary and Miss Carline and Miss Kesiah and all of the Stallinses wer at church, and when it was out I jest rid rite up to Miss Mary and lowed I'd see her home. She didn't say nothin, and I rid long side of her a little ways, and I begun to feel mighty good ; but fore we got out of site of the church ther was a whole gang of young fellers, and a heap more young ladys, cum ridin up and reinin in, and prancin and cavortin about so that nobody could tell who was ridin with which : all gabberin and talkin and laughin, as if they'd been to a cornshuckin more'n a meetin-house. Course Cousin Pete was thar, on uncle Josh's old white-eyed hors, with his saddle-bags on—for he always carrys 'em wharever he goes, to make folks blieve he's a doctor—and the way he tumbled the bigs words about was stonishin. I didn't say much, but rid monstrous close to one side of Miss Mary, so causin Pete couldn't shine much thar.

Well, we all got to old Miss Stallinses without any per-tickeler accident happenin, though I spected every minit to see sum of 'em histed right in the mud, the way they kept whippin one another's horses unawars, and playing all manner of pranks with one another. When we got thar the whole crowd stopped, and sum one perposed a walk down to the branch to git sum grapes. All hands was agreed cept old Miss Stallins, who said the galls better stay home and read the bibel. But you know it aint no use to talk bout ligion to young ladys when they aint sick nor sorry bout nothin ; so away we went—but I tuck monstrous good care to git long side of Miss Mary, and thar I stuck till we got down to the branch whar the grapes wer. You know the wild grapes is jest gettin good now—and I never seed a pretty young lady yet that didn't like something sour. Ther's lots of 'em all round the plantation, but the best ones is down on the branch. Cousin Pete and Ben Biers, and all the fellers, fell to gittin grapes for the ladys, but they all had ther Sunday fixins on, and was afraid to go into the brush much.

“ Oh my ! what pretty grapes is on that tree ! ” ses Miss Mary, lookin up half-way to the top of the grate big gum that stood rite over the water—and her pretty bright eyes sparklin like dew drops in the sunshine. “ Oh, I wish I had sum.”

Cousin Pete had been tryin to make himself popler with Miss Mary, but he didn't seem to care bout them high grapes

more'n sum that was lower down. But all the galls had got ther eyes on them high grapes.

"Them grapes is like the young ladys," ses Cousin Pete.

"Why is they like the galls?" asked Miss Kesiah.

"Oh, cause—cause they's sweet," ses Cousin Pete.

"I reckon it's cause they's hard to git," ses Bil Willson.

"It's cause they's more trouble to git than they's worth," ses Tom Stallins.

"Aint you shamed, brother Tom?" ses Miss Carline.

"What do you think, Majer?" ses Miss Mary, and she gin me one of them witchin side-looks of hern that almost made me jump rite out of my boots.

"Why," ses I, "I think they's like the young ladys, cause they's sour grapes to them as can't git 'em."

"Yes, Majer," ses she; "but you know they can git 'em that has the prowess to win 'em,"—and then she gin me a look that made me feel prouder than I ever did afore in my life—"and *you* can git 'em if you try, Majer; I know you kin."

When she said that last part, I seed Cousin Pete's lip sort o' drap. My hart liked to knock the buttons off my jacket, and I do blieve I'd had them grapes if I'd had to dig the tree up by the roots. My hat went off quicker than a flash, and up the old sweet-gum I went like a cat squirrel.

"Don't fall, Majer," ses Miss Mary. When she said that, I swar I like to let go, it made me feel so interestin. I wasn't no time in gittin to the very top branch, and the fust thing I done was to cut off the largest bunch, and throw it rite down to Miss Mary's feet.

"Thank you, Majer—thank you," ses she.

"Throw me sum, Majer," ses Miss Carline—"and me too"—"and me too"—"thank you, Majer"—"throw me sum, Majer"—"aint the Majer kind?"—"it takes him to climb trees," ses all the galls.

"He's good as a coon," ses Ben Biers.

"I can beat him any time," ses Tom Stallins.

"No, y-o-u can't, brother Tom, no sich thing," ses Miss Mary.

By this time I had gin 'em more grapes than they could all eat, and carry home to boot; and if I had jest cum down then, I'd com out fust rate. But you know that's the nice pint—to know when to stop; ther is sich a thing as bein a leetle *too* smart—and that's jest whar I mist the figure.

I was standin on one vine rite over the branch, with my hands holt of one over my head, and thinks I to myself, how it

would stonish 'em all now to see me skin the cat. My spunk was up, and thinks I, I'll jest show 'em what I kin do; so up I pulls my feet and twisted 'em round through my arms over backwards, and was lettin my body down tother side foremoot, when they all hollered out, "Oh, look at Majer Jones!"—"Oh, see what he's doin!" "Oh, I'm so fraid," ses Miss Mary. That made me want to do my best, so I let myself down slow and easy, and I begun to feel with my feet for the vine below. "Oh, my gracious!" ses Miss Kesiah, "see how he is twisted his arms round." Sum how I couldn't find the vine, and my arm begun to hurt, but I didn't say nothin. "A l-e-e-t-l-e further forward, Majer," ses Tom Stallins. "No; more to the right," ses Ben Biers. The ladys were all lookin and didn't know what to say. I kep tryin to touch both ways, but cus the vine was thar. Then I tried to get back agin, but I couldn't raise myself sum how, and I begun to feel monstrous dizzy, and the water below looked sort o' yaller and green, and had sparks of fire runnin all through it, and my eyes begun to feel so tite, I thought they would bust. They was all hollerin somethin down below, but I couldn't hear nothin but a terrible roarin sound, and the fust thing I knowd something tuck me rite under the chin, and fore I had time to breathe, kerslash I went rite in the cold water more'n six feet deep. I got my mouth chock full of muddy water, and how upon yeath I ever got out without droundin I can't see; for I was almost dead fore I drapt, and when I cum down I hit sumthing that like to broke my jaw-bone, and skinned my nose most bominable. When I got out the ladys were screamin for life, and Miss Mary was pale as her pockethankercher.

"Oh, I'm so glad you aint hurt no wurse, Majer," ses she; "I thought you was killed."

But, Lord! she didn't begin to know how bad I was hurt. I sot down on a log a little, and the fellers all cum round laughin like they was almost tickled to deth.

"Wasn't I rite, Majer—aint they more trouble to git than they's worth after you's got 'em?"

I didn't say nothin to Tom, cause he's Miss Mary's brother; but Cousin Pete cum up with his fine rigins on, laughin like a grate long-legged fool, as he is—says he,

"Aint you shamed to cut sich anticks as that?—I'd had more sense—jest look at your nose—ha, ha!—aint you got yourself in a nice fix?"

The galls was gitin redy to go home; Miss Mary was lookin monstrous serious.

"Don't you think he looks like a drownded rat, Miss Mary?" axed Cousin Pete.

"I think he looks as good as you do enny time," ses she.

Pete sort of look a leetle flat, and turned round and tried to laugh.

"I wouldn't take sich a duckin for all the sour grapes nor sour galls in Georgia," says he.

Thinks I, that's sort of personally insultin to Miss Mary, and I seed her face grow sort o' red. It wouldn't never do to let Cousin Pete hurt her feelins so rite afore my face, so ses I—

"You wouldn't, wouldn't you?" and with that I jest tuck hold of the gentleman and pitched him neck and heels rite into the branch.

When he got out he lowed he'd settle it with me sum other time, when thar wasn't no ladys along to take my part. That's the way Cousin Pete settles all his accounts—some other time. Tom Stallins tuck his sisters home, and the rest of the galls and fellers went along; but Cousin Pete and I didn't show ourselves no more that day. I haint seed him sense, tho' thars been all sorts of a muss tween mother and ant Mahaly bout it. I don't think I'll ever skin the cat agin.

XXIX.

WORSE THAN A COON.

THAT duckin what I got tother Sunday gin me a monstrous cold, and my nose feels jest about twice as big as it used to afore. Colds is curious things any way; no wonder people always calls 'em *bad*, for I don't know nothin but a down right fever'n ager that makes me so out o' sorts. Why, I can't taste nothin nor smell nothin, and I do blieve I've sneezed more'n five thousand times in the last twenty-four owers. I'm all the time a hich-cheein! so, I can't do nothin, or I'd rit you afore now bout a coon hunt we had tother night, whar I cotched more cold than coons. But we had some rale fun, I tell you. It was the—(ah whew! ah whew! ah! eh! hem!)—That's the way it takes me every now and then, almost puttin my neck out o' jint every time. But to proceed, as the preachers say—it was the fust coon hunt we'd had this

season, and I reckon it tuck the starch out o' sum of the boys, so they wont want to go agin in a hurry. Cousin Pete like to cotch'd his deth.

You see, I's got two of the best coon dogs in the settlement, and the fellers can't never go without 'em. Well, jest after supper I heard 'em cumin, blowin ther horns like they was gwine to tear down the walls of Jerico, and the dogs all howlin as if heaven and yeath was cumin together. I'd been layin off to go to see Miss Mary, but my nose wasn't well whar I blazed it on that dratted grape-vine, and so I thought I mought as well go long with 'em; specially as they begged so hard for my company (my patience, my nose feels jest like it was the spout of a bilin tea-kittle), and Smart and Wise wouldn't trail good without me to make 'em. So I told nigger Jim to git sum light-wood and the exe, and (——eh! ——ah! plague take the cold)—and let the dogs out, and cum along.

Well, Cousin Pete—he's never said peas bout the duckin I gin him, and I wish I hadn't done it now, for he's a rite clever-harted feller after all, and, you know, taint his fault cause he aint got no better sense. Cousin Pete was long, with two hound pups, and Tom Stallins had three or four hounds, and one grate big yaller cur, what wasn't worth shucks to trail, but was bomination to fight. Ben Biers had more dogs than you could shake a stick at; and sich another hellabeloo as they all made! why one couldn't hear himself think for 'em. It put me in mind of what Mr Shakespeare ses bout dogs—

“I never herd sich powerful discord,
Sich sweet thunder.”

Well, we soon tuck the woods down towards the branch, and ses I to Smart and Wise, “High on!” ses I, and away they went, snuffin and snortin like mad. The rest of the fellers hollered, “Steboy! sick 'em, Tows! hunt 'em, Troup! high on! hey!” and part of 'em went tarein through the brush like they had a coon's tail within a inch of ther noses. But ther was two or three young hounds—and, you know, they's the biggest fools in the world—what wouldn't budge; and when anybody tried to incourage 'em to hunt, they'd begin to squall like all natur, and cum jumpin about, and one of 'em licked Ben Biers rite in the face. “Cus your imperence!” ses Ben, “I'll larn you how to tree coons better'n that,” and spang he tuck one of 'em rite side of the

hed with a lighterd-not, and sich another ki-i! ki-i! ki-i-in! I never heard afore. Two or three of 'em tuck the hint and turned tale for home.

It was a bomitable dark night, and every now and then it kep sprinklin a little. I and two or three more carried torches, but some of 'em had none, and was all the time gittin lost, or gittin hung in the bushes, and then they'd holler out, "Hold the lite, sumbody, over here," till they got out of ther tanglement. It was a mighty sight of botherment, and we didn't go very fast, you may know.

Bimeby one of the dogs opened, and we all stopp'd to listen. "Ough! ough-ough!" In bout two minits more we heerd him agin: "Ough-ough! ough-ough! ough-ough!"

"That's Majer's Smart," ses Tom Stallins.

"He's treed," ses Ben Biers; "but he's way tother side of creation."

"No, he haint treed, but he's on a warm trail," ses I; for I know'd by the way he opened.

"I wouldn't go whar he is for all the coons in Georgia," ses Cousin Pete.

"Stop," ses I, "maybe he'll bring the trail up this way."

Shore enuff, he was cumin like a steam-car, every now and then blowin off—ough-ough! ough-ough! ough-ough!—gittin faster and louder as the track warmed. Then old Wise struck in, with his voice about three pitches higher than Smart's, and Troup and Touse, and the whole of 'em jined in, keepin a most oudacious racket. On they cum, and passed rite by us, gwine up the branch tcwards old Mr Mirick's corn field. We all turned and tuck after 'em, but they didn't go far before they all cum to a stop, and old Smart gin out his loud bull-dog, "ough!—ough!—ough!" which is jest as much as to say, "The coon's rite up this tree!"

When we got up to 'em, thar they all was, friskin about one of the biggest kind of poplers, rite close to the branch; all barkin and pantin and lookin up into the tree like they seed the coon run up. Sum times the young one would git in the way of the old dogs, and the fust they'd know, they'd git slung more'n six foot into the bushes; but they'd give a yelp or so and cum rite back to git sarved the same way agin. Well, I tell you what, it tuck a feller mighty wide between the eyes to tackle that tree, for it was a whopper; but at it we went, and by the time nigger Jim got his fires kindled all round, so the coon couldn't run off without our seein him, the old tree begun to feel week in the knees. "Hold the dogs, boys, she's gwine

to cave," ses Ben Biers. The next minit, kerslash! it went, rite into the branch, makin the muddy water fly in every direction. Fore the lims was all done fallin, in went the dogs. All was still for bout two minits fore anybody sed a word.

"They've got him!" ses Ben Biers, who was standin with his mouth wide open all the while; "they've got him! hurra!" then sich a nother rippin and tarein, and barkin and shoutin, and runnin mong the dogs and fellers. "Hurra! take him! bite him! sick him, Tows! lay hold of him, Wise! shake him, Smart!" and all kinds of couragement was hollered to the dogs, but every now and then one of 'em would cum out whinin, and holdin his hed a-one side with the lock-jaw, and his ears all slit to ribbins. The coon had the advantage of the dogs, for he was rite down in the brush and water, so more'n one couldn't git to him at a time nohow, and if one of 'em happened to take hold of the bitin end, in the dark, he was nearly licked to deth afore he could git loose.

Cousin Pete was on top of the log with a torch in his hand, coaxin on the dogs as hard as he could: "Here, Wolf," ses he, "hear, hear, take hold of him, good feller, shake him!" Tom Stallinses big cur jumped on to the log, and the next thing I know'd Cousin Pete's light was out, and the dogs had him down under the log with the coon; "Oh, my lord! git out! call off the dogs! bring a light, fellers!" hollered out Cousin Pete, but fore we could git thar the dogs like to used him up clean. The big dog he was callin knocked him off in tryin to git at the coon, and fore the other dogs found out the mistake they like to tare all his clothes off his back, they and the brush together.

By this time the coon tuck the bank and tried to make off, most of the dogs bein out of the notion of tryin him agin; but Tom Stallins' big cur gin him one more hitch. The coon had no frends in the crowd, but the other dogs was perfectly willin to show him fair fight; and if anybody don't blieve a coon's got natural pluck, he jest ought to seed that same old coon, the way he fit. Sumtimes Wolf would gether holt of him like he was gwine to swoller him whole, and mash him all into a cocked hat, but it didn't seem to have no effect, for in less than no time he'd have the dog rite by the cheek or by the ear, and he wouldn't let go till the hide gin away. It was the hottest night's work ever old Wolf undertuck, and it tuck a mighty chance of hollerin to make him stand up to his rack as well as he did. The other dogs kep runnin round and whinin mighty anxious, but they tuck good care to keep out of reach of the

coon. Bimeby I seed old Wolf drap his tail and kind o' wag it, when the coon had him by the jowl. I know'd it was all day with him then. "Shake him, Wolf! lay hold of him, old feller, bite him!" says Tom; but it want no use, the dog was clean licked, and the fust thing we knowd he was gone for home, kind o' whistlin a tune to himself as he went—and if nigger Jim hadn't fotch'd my pistols long with him, the coon would got away after all.

Cousin Pete wanted to go, so we gin nigger Jim the coon and started for home. Sum of the dogs was along, and they kep a mighty snortin like they'd cotched a monstrous bad cold, and every now and then they'd find sum new place bout 'em that wanted lickin. We was most up to the corner of our field when the dogs started up sumthing, and run it a little ways and stopped. Tom Stallins and Ben Biers, and one or two more, run to 'em fore I could git thar. "Thar it is—that black and white thing—on that log," ses Tom. "Steboy; catch him!" ses he. Ben run up with his light, and the fust thing I heerd him say was, "P-e-u-g-h! oh, my lord; look out, fellers! it's a pole-cat!" But it was too late for Ben, he got scent enough on him to last him for a month. The dogs got chuck full, and was rollin all about in the leaves, while Ben Biers stood and cussed more'n would blow the roof off a meetin house. It was most day fore we got home. Cousin Pete and Ben Biers say they won't never go coon huntin any more down that way, any how. My nose feels mighty queer.

XXX.

A YANKEE PEDLAR.

YES! I have laughed this morning, and that heartily, but I fear I shall scarce be able to amuse you at second-hand with what depends altogether on certain *un-writable* turns of countenance and manner. The hero of the occasion was an old pedlar, who came jogging along in his hearse-shaped cart, soon after breakfast, and before this dripping humour beset the weather. He stopped his cart on seeing several men at work, and it was not long before the laughter of the men, who usually pursue their business in solemn silence, drew my atten-

tion. The aspect of the pedlar secured it, for he was a personification of Momus. His face was very red, and of a most grotesque turn, and his nut-cracker nose and chin were like nobody but Punch. His gray eyes twinkled through a pair of mock spectacles made of a strip of tin twisted into the requisite form and placed far down his nose, so that he was obliged to throw his head back in order to look through them. When I went to the window, he was enumerating the contents of his covered cart with a bewildering rapidity, but as soon as he observed me, he stopped short, pulled off the remains of an old straw hat, and made a very low bow in the style of Sir Pertinax, who thought the world was to be won by "booing."

"My dear beautiful lady," said he, "could I sell you anything this morning? I sell things for nothing, and I've got most everything you ever heard tell on. Here's fashionable calicoes,"—holding up a piece of bright scarlet,—"*splendid* French work collars and capes,"—and here he displayed some hideous things, the flowers on which were distinctly traceable from where I stood,—"*elegant* milk pans, and Harrison skimmers, and *ne plus ultry* dippers! patent pills, cure anything you like—ague bitters—Shaker yarbs—essences, winter green, peppermint, lobely—tapes, pins, needles, hooks and eyes—broaches and brasslets—smelling bottles—castor ile—corn-plaster—mustard—garding seeds—silver spoons—pocket combs—tea-pots—green tea—*saleratus*—tracts, song-books—thimbles—babies' whistles—copy-books, slates, playin' cards—pud-din' sticks—butter-prints—baskets—wooden bowls——"

"Any wooden nutmegs, daddy?" said one of the men.

"No, but as I come past I see your father a turnin' some out o' that piece o' *lignum vitæ* you got him last week," said the pedlar quietly; then turning again to the window—"Can I suit you to-day, ma'am? I've all sorts o' notions—powder and shot (but I s'pose you do all your shootin' at home), but may be your old man goes a gunnin'—I sha'n't offer you lucifers, for ladies with sich eyes never buys matches,—but you can't ask me for anything I havn't got, I guess."

While I was considering my wants, one of the men must try a fall with this professed wit.

"Any goose-yokes, mister?" said he.

"I'm afraid I've sold the last, sir; there is so many wanted in this section of the country. But I'll take your measure, and fetch you a supply next time I come along." This of course produced a laugh.

"Well! I want a pair o' boots, any how," said the pros-

trate hero, rallying, to show that he was not discomfited. “These here old ones of mine lets in gravel, but won’t let it out again. If you’ve got any to fit me, I’ll look at ’em.” And thus saying he stretched out a leg of curious wire-drawn appearance. “Any to fit, old boss?”

“Fit you like a whistle, sir,” said the pedlar, fumbling among his wares, and at length drawing forth a pair of *candle moulds*, much to the amusement of the bystanders.

The rain which had begun to fall now cut short our conference. I bought a few trifles, and the pedlar received his pay with a bow which was almost a salaam. Mounting his blue hearse, he drove off in triumph, not minding the rain, from which he was completely sheltered by a screen of boughs fitted in the sides of his waggon, and meeting over his head,—a protection against sun and rain which I much admired.

XXXI.

“NOT A DROP MORE, MAJOR, UNLESS IT’S SWEETEN’D.”

IN a small village,* in the southern section of Missouri, resides a certain major, who keeps a small *cosey*, comfortable little inn, famous for its *sweeten’d drinks*, as well as jovial landlord; and few of the surrounding farmers visit the neighbourhood, without giving the major a friendly call, to taste his *mixtur’*. The gay host, with jolly phiz, round person, bright eye, and military air, deals out the rations, spiced with jokes, which, if they are not funny, are at least laughed at, for the major enjoys them so vastly himself, that his auditors are forced to laugh, out of pure sympathy.

A good old couple, who resided about six miles from the major’s, for a long period had been in the habit of visiting him once a month, and as regularly went home dreadfully *sweeten’d* with the favourite *mixtur’*; but of late, we learn, the amicable relations existing between the major and his old visitors have been broken off by green-eyed jealousy. On the last visit, good cause was given for an end being put to any more “sweet drinking.”

* A very similar story is told of people in a higher class of life in Cumberland (England), but which is the original I shall not attempt to decide.—*Edit.*

"Uncle Merrill, how *are* you, *any* how?" was the major's greeting; "and I *declare* if the missus aint with you, *too*"—just as if he expected she wouldn't come. "What'll you take, missus? shall I *sweeten* you a little of about *the* best Cincinnati rectified that ever was *toted* into these 'ere parts?—it jest looks as bright as your eyes!" and here the major winked and looked so sweet there was no resisting, and she *did* take a little sweeten'd.

The hours flew *merril-ly* by, and evening found the old couple so overloaded with sweets, that it was with great difficulty they could be seated on the old gray mare, to return home; but, after many a kind shake from the host, and just another drop of his sweeten'd, off they jogged, sec-sawing from side to side on the critter, the old lady muttering her happiness, and the old man too full to find words to express himself.

"Sich another man as that major," says she, "aint nowhere—and sich a mixtur' as he *does* make is temptin' to temperance lecturers. He is an amazin' nice man, and, if anything, he sweetens the last drop better than the first. Good gracious! what a pleasin' critter he is!"

Ever and anon these encomiums on the major and his mixture broke from the old lady, until of a sudden, on passing a small rivulet, a jolt of the mare's silenced them, and the old man rode on a short distance in perfect quietness. At length he broke out with—

"Old woman, you and that 'ere major's conduct, to-day, war *rayther* unbecomin'—his *formalities* war too sweet to be mistook, and you aint goin' *thar* agin in a hurry."

Silence was the only answer.

"Oh, you're huffy, are you?" continued the old man. "Well, I guess you can stay so till you give in," and on he jogged in a silently jealous mood. On arriving at the farm, he called to a negro to lift the old woman off, but *Sam*, the nigger, stood gazing at him in silent astonishment.

"Lift her off, you Sam, do your hear?—and do it carefully, or some of her wrath'll bile out. In spite of the major's sweetenin' she's mad as thunder."

"Why, de lor', massa, de ole 'oman aint dar," replied Sam, his eyes standing out of his countenance. "Jest turn round, massa, and satisfy you'self dat de ole 'oman clar gone an missin—*de lor'!*"

And sure enough, on a minute examination by the old man, she *was* "found missing." The major was charged at once with abduction, instant measures were taken for pursuit, and a

party despatched to scour the roads. On proceeding about two miles on the road to the major's, the party were suddenly halted at the small rivulet, by finding the missus with her head lying partly in the little stream, its waters laving her lips, and softly murmuring—"Not a drop more, major, *unless it's sweeten'd!*"

XXXII.

SKETCHES OF CHARACTER IN FLORIDA.

ON a late passage up the Chattahoochee river, I met with a few choice spirits that could relate an occasional anecdote, which may be as well recorded for future use where they will keep. The first I will call the

FAT TURKEY.

One of my fellow-passengers was a planter of East Florida, by the name of Cole—a gentleman of great humour, and a fund of anecdote. He was out one day with one of that remarkable genus of people who fill up a space in the piney woods of this world, who have a dialect peculiar to the race; some particular items of which were new to Mr C., and one word knocked him entirely off his feet.

After getting a first-rate location, the *native* undertook to call up a turkey for my unpractised friend to shoot. The call had not been continued long before a fine glossy old gobbler walked up in fair range, and my friend was drawing a fine bead on him, when the Cracker tapped him on the shoulder, and said, in a sort of patronizing tone—"My God! Mr Cole, he is *miserably* fat." The time, tone, and peculiar phrase, took him so unawares that he yielded to impulse, dropped his gun, and rolled over in a convulsion of laughter, so provoking to his companion at the loss of the shot and the *miserably fat* turkey, that he was ready to whip him on the spot.

OUT OF SOAP.

It is well known that pine wood will not make ashes that afford any potash, and therefore it is necessary, before the good wife can make that indispensable article of household economy,

soft soap—so much used by neat ladies and polite politicians—that the head of the house, who is universally designated by the wife as *him* or *he*, should provide a supply of hard wood—always designated as *ash-wood*, whether oak or hickory.

My friend and a companion called one day at one of those piney woods mansions of health and happiness (in a horn), and found the lady and upwards of seven children in the doorway; she hastily rose, dragging a lot of the dirty little responsibilities out of the way, saying—"Du come in, if you can git in for the nastiness—but I can't help it, for *he* won't git any *ash-wood*, and I'm clean out of soap."

Wonder if all the dirty houses are chargeable to the same cause, that the *he* one of the family won't get any *ash-wood*.

PRECISION.

"Mrs Wood, are your daughters at home?"

"Wal, they aint, stranger—I can tell that, for sure."

"Can you tell me where they are gone, Mrs Wood?"

"Wal, I can that! They are gone to *old* Mr Oliver's, to a *ball*—and that is where they are gone precisely."

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

A gentleman was once travelling through Alabama when water was not the most abundant article, when he discovered a specimen of a one-mule cart—such as some of the good citizens of North Carolina use for purposes of emigration, when they are necessitated to seek a new location, in consequence of the supply of material for the manufacture of tar failing in the old homestead. Every appearance indicated a camp for the night, though the only person moving was a "right smart chunk of a boy," who was evidently in trouble. The inside of the cart gave a constant strain of baby music, and a succession of groans, indicating deep distress. This, and the grief of the boy, aroused the kind sympathy of the traveller, and he rode up and inquired if anything was the matter.

"Is anything the matter?" replied the boy—"I should think there was. Do you see that old feller lying there, drunk as thunder?—that's dad. Do you hear them groanings?—that's the old woman; got the ague like blazes! Brother John he's gone off in the woods to play poker for the mule, with an *entire* stranger. Sister Sal has gone scooting through the bushes with a half-bred Ingen, and — if I know what *they* are up to; and do you hear that baby? don't he go it with a looseness!—well he does that—and he is in a bad fix at that, and it is a

mile to water, and there isn't the first drop of licker in the jug; and aint that matter enough? Won't you light, stranger?—Dad 'll get sober, and 'Sal will be back arter a bit. Darn'd if this aint moving, though. *Is anything the matter?*—shouldn't think there was much, no how. Give us a chaw of terbacker, will ye, stranger?

WHO HAS SEEN BILL JEWITT?

"I say, mister, is your name Judge Mays? 'cause as how if 'tis, you are just the man for my money," said a tall specimen of the linsey-woolsey order, as he walked into the judge's office one day, in Madison county, Florida, whip in hand, with a general expression of the immigrant, from *forrin* parts, and wearing a very easy devil-may-care sort of expression.

The judge gave him to understand he was that same.

"Well, I thought as how, seeing you had right smart of law books about, for they told me you was a powerful high larnt man, and knew more about these Floridays than any other man in 'em, and if any man living could tell me about my brother-in-law, you jist could, and no mistake."

"I shall be very happy to serve you. Who is your brother-in-law?"

"Who is he? why Bill Jewitt, to be sure. I married a Jewitt—Sally Jewitt—daughter of old Joe Jewitt, you knew him, I reckon—he lived in South Carolina. Didn't you come from there, squire? Well, I married old Joe's daughter—miserable fine woman, she is. Do you see that waggon, judge? well, squire, she is in that waggon, she is—unless may be she's gone out with some of the children arter water, or something of that sort; got four powerful fine boys, colonel; and now if you will tell me where to find Bill Jewitt, we'll just light down on him, for my wife is right smart tired of moving—come all the way from South Carolina, Abbeville district, in that machine, and my critters are nigh upon't gin out. I tell you what it is, mister, 'tween you and me, some of them Georgians are mighty hard cases, and when corn is a dollar a bushel they don't feed free, that's a fact; and I 'spect Bill Jewitt has got right smart of corn, for he *fotched* off some powerful likely nigger fellers, and he had a mighty big chance of money, and I expect he's right well off for corn, as well as all sorts of roughness, and I du wont to jist ungear my animals, and get them in his lot, and the old woman sorter under cover like. And so you see, stranger, I'm powerful anxious to find Bill Jewitt, that are a fact, and if you've got any carnal knowledge of the critter, let

it out, and I'll be mighty obleeged, for my old woman is gitting sorter oneasy like, that we shan't find the tarnal varmint, now we've got here arter such a sight of trouble."

The judge saw he had *a case*, if not a fee.

"And so you are brother-in-law to Bill, are you?"

"Well, I am that. So you do know him, then—I thought so."

"And you married old Joe Jewitt's daughter of Abbeville district?"

"Well, I didn't marry anybody else. Well, now, I reckoned as how you must knowed him, for they told me over to the grocery there, that if any man on this yarth could tell me where to find Bill Jewitt, that Judge Mays was jist that man, and no mistake. I must holler over to the old woman, for I see she is sticking her hand out of the waggon, sort of impatient like, and let her know we have found her brother, my brother-in-law, Bill Jewitt. Hurrah!"

"Wait a little. Let us make out the case quite clear."

"Precisely, stranger. I'll vote for you any way you can fix it."

"And your wife's name is Sally, the eldest daughter of old Joe Jewitt?"

"Why how on earth did you know her name? Why you are acquainted with the family, that's a fact. Yes, she is the oldest darter, and Bill is next—that's all the old man ever had, except young Joe, and he was by a another woman like. Bad business, stranger, this marrying a second time. Now, then, my wife and Bill would had all the old man's estate, if hadn't been for that second marriage; six likely nigger fellers, and right smart of women and children, and some powerful fine mules, besides all the housel plunder, and then the land is some account, any how."

"And you've been five weeks on the road, and are getting tired?"

"We are [that, and we want to drive right spang into Bill Jewitt's lot. I don't care how quick. Is it far?"

"Let us see. We must be sure we have made out the case before we decide. Bill moved here in the year eighteen hundred and thirty——"

"Seven. Yes, sir. Why, you remember the very time."

"That is, he left South Carolina that year?"

"Yes, sir, and said he was going right straight down to them Floridays, and he had the money to do it. He onderstood horses mighty well, and, more'n that, he'd shave a note as quick as any man."

“And he wrote you that he had settled in the ——”

“Promised land! Yes, he did; that is, he got somebody to do that thing. I reckon as how you must have writ that letter, squire, as you seem to know all about Bill Jewitt, just as well as those that made him.”

“And you are very anxious to find your respected brother-in-law, William Jewitt, Esquire?”

“Why, thunder, gin’ral, you don’t say Bill has got to be squire down here in these Floridays. I must tell the old woman.”

“Wait a moment; I am just about to decide upon your case. You have given us a very interesting statement of facts in the case, from which we learn that *old Joe Jewitt*, of *Abbeville* district, South Carolina, had two children, the eldest of which, who was known by the soft and euphonious name of *Sal*, is now your old woman. The youngest was his son *Bill*, who emigrated to the *Floridays*—the promised land—in the year 1837, with sundry negroes, plenty of money, a good understanding of horses, and a disposition to shave notes. As to yourself, the evidence is conclusive, that you married the aforesaid *Sal*, and that you are now yourself just entering upon this promised land in the *Floridays*, in anxious pursuit of the aforesaid *Bill Jewitt*, and you have been referred to me for information.”

“Well, now, judge, I s’pose that is all according to law, but I don’t exactly understand all the high larnt terms, though there is no mistake; but I do want to know some information about *Bill Jewitt*, so I can drive right straight there and feed my critters, for not the first bite of corn have they had a smell at to-day, and I have only had one half-pint of any kind of drink myself; and it’s contrary to human natur that any team can stand such feed.”

“Woll! as you are anxious to finish your long journey, I won’t detain you. Do you see that road? That leads directly toward the promised land of South Florida. I think that must be where *Bill Jewitt* lives, as I never heard of such a *Bill* among all the bills in chancery, chance, or equity, including some tavern-bills without equity, in all the Eastern, Middle, or Western *Floridays*, and if your *Bill* is anywhere in these days, he must be in South *Floriday*. At any rate, if you don’t find *Bill Jewitt* there, you will be sure to find *Bill Borolegs*, and I have no doubt he can feed your critters, and will be as ready to shave your notes as your honoured brother-in-law, whom I am very sorry to say, I never saw and never heard of, except from yourself.”

If a small chunk of thunder had dropped suddenly upon the astonished brother-in-law of Bill Jewitt, it would probably have astonished him less than this speech; the only part of which he fully understood was, that with all the legal knowledge of the judge, he did not know "Where is Bill Jewitt."

XXXIII.

THE TRAPPER'S STORY

"YE see, strangers," said the old man, "or Bossoners (though I 'spect it don't make no pertikelar dif'rence what I calls ye, so it don't hurt your feelins none), as I sez afore, I was raised down to Arkansaw, or thereabouts, and it's nigh on to sixty year now sence I fust tuk a center-shot at daylight, and in course I've forgot all the feelins a fust sight gin me. Howsomever, that's nothin here nor tother.—(I say, Will, *ef* you've got that thar bottle about you, I doesn't mind a taste, jest to grease this here bacca—augh! Thankee, Will, you're some, *you* is.)

"Well, strangers, you needn't 'spect I'm agoin to gin ye my whole hist'ry, case I isn't, and don't know's I could ef I wanted to, case most on't's forgot. ^ So now I'll jest jump o'er a card o' time, and come down to 'bout four year ago come next Feberry, when it was so all-fired cold, it froze icykels on to the star rays, and stoped 'em comin down; and the sun froze so he couldn't shine; and the moon didn't git up at all, *she* didn't; and this here arth was as dark nor a stack o' chowdered niggers."

Here the Irishman, unable to stand it longer, roared out—

"Howly saints! ye're not spaking truth, now, Misther Black George?"

"Aint I, though?" answered the old trapper, gravely, slyly tipping the wink to one of his companions. "D'ye think I'd lie 'bout it? You remembers the time, Will?"

"Well I does, hoss," replied Will, with a grin.

"In course ye does, and so doos everybody that knowed anything 'bout it. I may hev exaggerted a leetle 'bout the stars and them things, but I jest tell ye what was fact and no

mistake, and I'll be dog-gone ef I doesn't stake my v'racity on its bein true's preachin'!"

Here the old man made a pause.

"Well, well, go on!" cried I.

"Ay, ay!" echoed Huntly.

"Well," said Black George, "a leetle drap more o' that critter—jest a taste—case the truth makes me so infernal dry, you can't tell. Augh! thankee—(returning the bottle)—feel myself agin now. But let's see, whar was I?"

"You were speaking about the weather."

"So I was, that's a fact; I'll be dog-gone ef I wasn't! Well, as I's a sayin, it got so cold that when you throwed water up in the air, it all froze afore it could git down, and acterly had to stay thar, case it froze right on to the atmospheric."

"On to what?"

"The atmospheric."

"What is that?"

"You doesn't know what atmospheric is? Well, I'll be dog-gone ef I'm going to 'lighten nobody; much's I ken do to understand for myself. But I knows the water froze to that article, for that's what I hearn a schollard call it, and I reckon he knowd a heap any how."

"Well, well, the story," cried I.

"Yes, well, I haint got through tellin how cold it was yit. Not only the water froze to the atmospheric, but the animals as used to run o'nights all quit the business, and you could walk right up to one and pat him han'some; case why—his eyesight was all froze right up tight to his head. Fact! I'll be dog-gone ef it wasn't!

"Well, I'd bin out trappin, and had made a purty good lick at it, and was comin down to Bent's Fort, to make a lounge for the winter—leastwise for what was left on't—when jest as I crossed Cherry Creek, arter having left the Sothe Platte, I wish I may be smashed, ef I didn't see 'bout a dozen cussed Rapahos (Arrapahoes) coming toward me on hosses, as ef old Nick himself was arter 'em. I looked around me, and darned o' a thing could I see but snow and ice—and the snow was froze so hard that the hosses' and muleys' feet didn't make no impression on't. I was all alone, horse-back, with three good muleys, all packed han'some; for Jim Davis—him as travelled with me—and Andy Forsker, another chap that made our party—had gone round another way, jest for fear o' them same painted heathen as was now comin up. But ye see I'd bin bolder nor them, and now I was a-goin to pay for't, sartin; for I seed by thar looks they was

bound to 'raise hair'* ef I didn't do somethin for my country quicker. I looked all around me, and thought I was a gone beaver fast enough. I had a purty good hoss under me, and I knowed he only *could* save me, and a mighty slim chance he'd have on't at that. Howsomever, I reckoned it wasn't best to say die ef I could live, and I didn't like the notion o' bein 'rubbed out'† by such a dog-gone, scrimptious lookin set o' half humans as them thar Rapahos. I cast around me, and seed that old Sweetlove (rifle), and her pups (pistols), and my butchers (knife and tomahawk), was all about; and so I jest swore I'd set my traps and make one on 'em 'come,' ef I 'went a wolfin' for it.

"I said thar was 'bout a dozen—maybe more—and they was ticklin thar hosses' ribs mighty han'some, you'd better believe, and a comin for me with a perfect looseness, every one on 'em carryin a bow, and every bow bent with an arrer in it. I knowed my muleys was gone sartin, and all my traps and furs; but jest then I felt so all-fired mad, that I thought ef I could throw a couple, I wouldn' care a kick. So instead o' trying to run away, I hollered 'Whoa' to the animals, and waited for the red-skins to come up—(Jest a drap more o' that, Rash, *ef* you please; for this here hoss is as dry to-night as a dog-woried skunk).

"Well, on they comes, thunderin away like a newly invented arthquake, and I 'spected for sartin I was a gone beaver. Jest afore they got up so as they could let thar shafts riddle me, the infernal cowards seein as how I didn't budge, had the oudaciousness to come to a halt, and stare at me as ef I was a kangaroo. I raised Sweetlove, and told her to tell 'em I's about, and 'some in a bar fight.' She answered right han'some, did Sweetlove, and down the for'ard one drapped right purty, *he* did. Well, this sot the rest on 'em in a rage, and afore I knowed it they was all round me, yellin like the old Scratch. Half-a-dozen shafts come hiss in through my buckskins, and two on 'em stuck right in my meat-bag, and made me feel all over in spots like a Guinea nigger. Instanter I pulled out Sweetlove's pups, and set 'em to barkin, and two more o' the humans drapped down to see how the snow felt. Knowin it wasn't no use to be foolin my time, I jerked the ropes, and told Skinflint to travel afore my hair was raised, leavin the muleys to do what they liked.

"Seein me a-goin, the oudacious Rapahos thought they'd

* Take my scalp.

† Killed.

stop me; but I did right through 'em purty, and got another arrer in my back for it.

"Arter I'd got away, I looked round and seed two on 'em a-comin like all possessed, with thar lariats doubled for a throw. I knowed ef they got near enough, I'd be snaked off like a dead nigger, and my hair raised afore I could say Jack Robinson. Maybe I didn't ax Skinflint to do his purtiest, and maybe he didn't, hey! Why he left a trail o' fire behind him, as he went over that frozen snow, that looked for all nater like a streak o' big lightnin. But it didn't seem to be o' no use; for the infernal scamps come thunderin on, jest about so far behind, and I seed thar hosses was all o' the right stuff. The sun was about a two hour up, and thar he stayed, *he* did; for it was so almighty cold, as I said afore, he couldn't git down to hide.

"Well, on we run, and run, and run, till the hosses smoked and puffed like a Massassip steamer, and still we run. I made tracks as nigh as I could calculate for the mountains in the direction o' Pike's Peak, and on we went, as ef old Brimstone was arter us. I calculated my chasers 'ud git tired and gin in; but they was the real grit, and didn't seem to mind it. At last they begun to gain on me, and I knowed from 'the signs' o' Skinflint, that he'd have to go under, sure's guns, ef I didn't come to a rest purty soon. You'd better believe I felt queer jest then, and thought over all my sins, with the arrers stickin in my belly and back like all git out. I tried to pray; but I'd never larnt no prayers when a pup, and now I was too old a dog to ketch new tricks; besides, it was so all-fired cold, that my thoughts stuck in my head like they was pinned thar with icykels. I'd bin chased afore by the Comanches and Blackfoot, by the Pawnees and Kickapoos, by the Crows and Chickasaws, but I'd never had sich feelins as now. The short on't is, boys, I was gittin the squaw into me, and I knowed it; but I'll be dog-gone ef I could help it, to save my hair, that stood up so stiff and straight as to raise my hat and let the atmospheric in about a feet. I was gittin outrageous cold too, and could feel my heart pumpin up icykels by the sack full, and I knowed death was about sartin as daylight.

"'Well,' sez I to myself, 'old hoss, you've got to go under and lose your top-knot, so what's the use a kickin?'

"'Howsomever,' I answered, 's'posin I has, I reckon's best to die game, aint it?'"—and with this I pulled old Sweetlove round and commenced fodderin her as best I could. She knowed what was wanted, did Sweetlove, and looked riht sassy, I'll be dog-gone ef she didn't.

“‘You’re a few, aint you?’ sez I, as I rammed home an all-fired charge of powder, that made her grunt like forty.

“Well, I turned round, fetched her up to her face, and ‘drawin a bead’* on to the nearest, pulled the trigger.

“Now you needn’t believe it without ye take a notion, but I’ll be rumfuzzled (Stir that fire, Ned, or this here meat won’t git toasted till midnight) ef she didn’t hold shoot about a minnet, and I all the time squintin away too, afore the fire could melt the ice round the powder and let her off. That’s a fact! —I’ll be dog-gone ef it wasn’t!

“Well, she went off at last, *she* did, with a whoosss-k cheeesss-cup cho-bang, and I hope I may be dogged for a possum, ef one o’ my chasers didn’t hev to pile himself on a level with his moccasin right han’some. Now I thought as how this ’ud start the wind out o’ t’other, and put him on the back’ard track. But it didn’t. He didn’t seem to mind it no more’n’s ef it was the commonest thing out.

“‘Well,’ thinks I to myself, ‘maybe you’ll ketch a few ef you keep foolin your time that-a-ways;’ and so I set to work and foddered Sweetlove agin.

“By this time poor Skinflint, I seed, was gittin top-heavy right smart, and I knowed ef I done anything, it ’ud hev to be did afore the beginnin o’ next month, or ’twouldn’t be o’ no use, not a darned bid. Well, I tuk squint agin, plum-center, and blazed away; but hang me up for bar’s meat, ef it made the least dif’rence with the skunk of a Rapaho. I was perfect dumfouzled; complete used up; for I’d never missed a target o’ that size afore, sence I was big enough to shoot pop-guns to flies. I felt sort a chawed up. Never felt so all of a heap afore but once’t, and that was when I axed Suke Harris to hev me, and she said ‘No.’

“Now you’d better calculate I hadn’t no great deal o’ time to think, for thar he was—the cussed Injin—jest as plain as the nose on your face, and a-comin full split right at me, with his rope quirked in his hand, jest ready for a throw. Quicker as winkin I foddered Sweetlove agin, and gin him another plum-center, which in course I spected would knock the hindsights off on him. Did it? Now you ken take my possibles, traps and muleys, ef it did. Did it? No! reckons it didn’t. Thar he sot, straight up and down, a thunderin on jest as ef the arth was made for his special purpose. I begun to git skeered in arnest, and thought maybe it was the devil deformed into a

* Taking close sight.

Injin ; and I'd a notion to put in a silver bullet, only I didn't happen to have none 'bout me.

"On he come, the scamp, and on I bolted—or tried to rayther—for Skinflint had got used up, and down he pitched, sending me right plum over his noddle on to my back, whar I lay sprawlin like a bottle o' spilt whiskey.

"'It's all up now, and I'm a gone possum,' sez I, as I seed the Injin come tearin ahead ; and I drawed the old butcher, and tried to feed one o' the pups, but my fingers was so numb I couldn't.

"Well up rides old Rapaho, lookin as savage nor a meat-axe, his black eyes shinin like two coals o' fire. Well now, what d'ye think he did ? Did he shoot me ? No ! Did he rope (lasso) me ? No ! Did he try to ? No, I'll be dog-gone ef he did !"

"What did he do ?" inquired I quickly.

"Ay, ay, what did he do ?" echoed Huntly.

"Howly Mary ! if ye knows what he did, Misther George, spaak it jist, an relave yer mind now," put in the Irishman.

The old trapper smiled.

"Rash," he said, "ef that thar bottle isn't empty, I'll jest take another pull."

"Taint all gone yet," answered Rash Wil ; "'spect 'twill be soon ; but go it, old hoss, and gin us the rest o' that —— Rapahos affair."

The old man drank, smacked his lips, smiled, and remarked,

"How comfortable deer meat smells !"

"But the Rapaho," cried I, "what did he do ?"

"Do !" answered black George, with a singular expression that I could not define ; "Do ! why he rid up to my hoss and stopped, *he* did ; and didn't do nothin else, *he* didn't."

"How so ?"

"Case he was done for."

"Dead ?"

"As dog meat—augh !"

"Ah ! you had killed him, then ?" cried I.

"No, I hadn't, though."

"What then ?"

"He'd died himself, *he* had."

"How, died ?"

"Froze, young Bossons, froze as stiff nor a white oak."

"Froze !" echoed two or three voices, mine among the rest.

"Yes, blaze my old carcass and send me a wolfin, ef he

hadn't! and I, like a —— fool, had bin runnin away from a dead nigger. Maybe I didn't swear some, and say a few that aint spoke in the pulpit. You'd jest better believe, strangers, I felt soft as a chowdered possum."

"But how had he followed you, if he was dead?"

"He hadn't, not pertikerlarly; but his hoss had; for in course he didn't know his rider was rubbed out, and so he kept on arter mine, till the divin o' old Skinflint fetched him up a-standin."

"Of course you were rejoiced at your escape?"

"Why, sort o' so, and sort o' not; for I felt so all-fired mean, to think I'd bin runnin from and shootin to a dead Injin, that for a long spell I couldn't git wind enough to say nothin.

"At last I sez, sez I, 'This here's purty business now, aint it? I reckons, old beaver, you've had little to do, to be foolin your time and burnin your powder this way;' and then I outs with old butcher, and swore I'd raise his hair.

"Well, I coaxed my way up to his old hoss, and got hold on himself; but it wasn't a darned bit o' use; he was froze tight to the saddle. I tried to cut into him, but I'll be dog-gone ef my knife 'ud enter more'n 'twould into a stone. Jest then I tuk a look round, and may I be rumboozled, ef the sun hadn't got thaw'd a leetle, and arter strainin so hard, had gone down with a jump right behind a big ridge.

"'Well,' sez I, 'this nigger'd better be making tracks somewhar, or he'll spile, sure.'

"So wishin ald Rapaho a pleasant time on't, I tried Skinflint, but findin it wasn't no go, I gathered up sich things from my possibles as I couldn't do without, pulled the arrers out o' me, and off I sot for a ridge 'bout five mile away."

XXXIV.

OPERATIVE DEMOCRACY; OR, GIRL HUNTING.

"CAN'T you let our folks have some eggs?" said Daniel Webster Larkins, opening the door, and putting in a little straw-coloured head and a pair of very mild blue eyes just far enough to reconnoitre; "can't you let our folks have some eggs? Our old hen don't lay nothing but chickens now, and mother can't

eat pork, and she a'n't had no breakfast, and the baby a'n't drest, nor nothin'!"

"What's the matter, Webster? Where's your girl?"

"Oh! we ha'n't no girl but father, and he's had to go 'way to-day to a raisin'—and mother wants to know if you can't tell her where to get a girl."

Poor Mrs Larkins! Her husband makes but an indifferent "girl," being a remarkable public-spirited person. The good lady is in very delicate health, and having an incredible number of little blue eyes constantly making fresh demands upon her time and strength, she usually keeps a girl when she can get one. When she cannot, which is unfortunately the larger part of the time, her husband dresses the children—mixes stir-cakes for the eldest blue eyes to bake on a griddle, which is never at rest—milks the cow—feeds the pigs—and then goes to his "business," which we have supposed to consist principally in helping at raisings, wood-bees, huskings, and such like important affairs; and "girl" hunting—the most important and arduous and profitless of all.

Yet it must be owned that Mr Larkins is a tolerable carpenter, and that he buys as many comforts for his family as most of his neighbours. The main difficulty seems to be that "help" is not often purchasable. The very small portion of our damsels who will consent to enter anybody's doors for pay, makes the chase after them quite interesting from its uncertainty; and the damsels themselves, subject to a well-known foible of their sex, become very coy from being over-courted. Such racing and chasing, and begging and praying, to get a girl for a month! They are often got for life with half the trouble. But to return.

Having an esteem for Mrs Larkins, and a sincere experimental pity for the forlorn condition of "no girl but father," I set out at once to try if female tact and perseverance might not prove effectual in ferreting out a "help," though mere industry had not succeeded. For this purpose I made a list in my mind of those neighbours, in the first place, whose daughters sometimes condescended to be girls; and, secondly, of the few who were enabled by good luck, good management, and good pay, to keep them. If I failed in my attempts upon one class, I hoped for some new lights from the other. When the object is of such importance, it is well to string one's bow double.

In the first category stood Mrs Lowndes, whose forlorn log-house had never known door or window; a blanket supplying the place of the one, and the other being represented by a

crevice between the logs. Lifting the sooty curtain with some timidity, I found the dame with a sort of reel before her, trying to wind some dirty tangled yarn; and ever and anon kicking at a basket which hung suspended from the beam overhead by means of a strip of hickory bark. This basket contained a nest of rags and an indescribable baby; and in the ashes on the rough hearth played several dingy objects, which I suppose had once been babies.

"Is your daughter at home now, Mrs Lowndes?"

"Well, yes! M'randy's to hum, but she's out now. Did you want her?"

"I came to see if she could go to Mrs Larkins, who is very unwell, and sadly in want of help."

"Miss Larkins! why, do tell! I want to know! Is she sick agin? and is her gal gone? Why! I want to know! I thought she had Lo-i-sy Paddon! Is Lo-i-sy gone?"

"I suppose so. You will let Miranda go to Mrs Larkins, will you?"

"Well, I donnow but I would let her go for a spell, just to 'commodate 'em. M'randy may go if she's a mind ter. She needn't live out unless she chooses. She's got a comfortable home, and no thanks to nobody. What wages do they give?"

"A dollar a week."

"Eat at the table?"

"Oh! certainly."

"Have Sundays?"

"Why no—I believe not the whole of Sunday—the children, you know—"

"Oh ho!" interrupted Mrs Lowndes, with a most disdainful toss of the head, giving at the same time a vigorous impulse to the cradle, "if that's how it is, M'randy don't stir a step! She don't live nowhere if she can't come home Saturday night and stay till Monday morning."

I took my leave without further parley, having often found this point the *sine quâ non* in such negotiations.

My next effort was at a pretty-looking cottage, whose overhanging roof and neat outer arrangements spoke of English ownership. The interior by no means corresponded with the exterior aspect, being even more bare than usual, and far from neat. The presiding power was a prodigious creature, who looked like a man in woman's clothes, and whose blazing face, ornamented here and there by great hair moles, spoke very intelligibly of the beer-barrel, if of nothing more exciting. A daughter of this virago had once lived in my family, and the

mother met me with an air of defiance, as if she thought I had come with an accusation. When I unfolded my errand, her *abord* softened a little, but she scornfully rejected the idea of her Lucy living with any more Yankees.

"You pretend to think everybody alike," said she, "but when it comes to the pint, you're a sight more uppish and saucy than ra'al quality at home; and I'll see the whole Yankee race to ——"

I made my exit without waiting for the conclusion of this complimentary observation; and the less reluctantly for having observed on the table the lower part of one of my teaspoons, the top of which had been violently wrenched off. This spoon was a well-remembered loss during Lucy's administration, and I knew that Mrs Larkins had none to spare.

Unsuccessful thus far among the arbiters of our destiny, I thought I would stop at the house of a friend, and make some inquiries which might spare me further rebuffs. On making my way by the garden gate to the little library where I usually saw Mrs Stayner, I was surprised to find it silent and uninhabited. The windows were closed; a half-finished cap lay on the sofa, and a bunch of yesterday's wild flowers upon the table. All spoke of desolation. The cradle—not exactly an appropriate adjunct of a library scene elsewhere, but quite so at the west—was gone, and the little rocking-chair was nowhere to be seen. I went on through parlour and hall, finding no sign of life, save the breakfast-table still standing with crumbs undisturbed. Where bells are not known, ceremony is out of the question; so I penetrated even to the kitchen, where at length I caught the sight of the fair face of my friend. She was bending over the bread-tray, and at the same time telling nursery stories as fast as possible, by way of coaxing her little boy of four years old to rock the cradle which contained his baby sister.

"What *does* this mean?"

"Oh! nothing more than usual. My Polly took herself off yesterday without a moment's warning, saying she thought she had lived out about long enough; and poor Tom, our factotum, has the ague. Mr Stayner has gone to some place sixteen miles off, where he was told he might hear of a girl, and I am sole representative of the family energies. But you've no idea what capital bread I can make."

This looked rather discouraging for my quest; but, knowing that the main point of table-companionship was the source of most of Mrs Stayner's difficulties, I still hoped for

Mrs Larkins, who loved the closest intimacy with her "helps," and always took them visiting with her. So I passed on for another effort at Mrs Randall's, whose three daughters had sometimes been known to lay aside their dignity long enough to obtain some much-coveted article of dress. Here the mop was in full play; and Mrs Randall, with her gown tied up, was splashing diluted mud on the walls and furniture, in the received mode of these regions, where "stained-glass windows" are made without a patent. I did not venture in, but asked from the door, with my best diplomacy, whether Mrs Randall *knew* of a girl.

"A gal! no; who wants a gal?"

"Mrs Larkins."

"She! why don't she get up and do her own work?"

"She is too feeble."

"Law sakes! too feeble! she'd be able as anybody to thrash round, if her old man didn't spile her by waitin' on—"

We think Mrs Larkins deserves small blame on this score.

"But, Mrs Randall, the poor woman is really ill, and unable to do anything for her children. Couldn't you spare Rachel for a few days to help her?"

This was said in a most guarded and deprecatory tone, and with a manner carefully moulded between indifference and undue solicitude.

"My galls has got enough to do. They a'n't able to do their own work. Cur'line hasn't been worth the fust red cent for hard work ever since she went to school to A——."

"Oh! I did not expect to get Caroline. I understand she is going to get married."

"What! to Bill Green? She wouldn't let him walk where she walked last year!"

Here I saw I had made a misstep. Resolving to be more cautious, I left the selection to the lady herself, and only begged for one of the girls. But my eloquence was wasted. The Miss Randalls had been a whole quarter at a select school, and will not live out again until their present stock of finery is unwearable. Miss Rachel, whose company I had hoped to secure, was even then paying attention to a branch of the fine arts.

"Rachel Amandy!" cried Mrs Randall at the foot of the ladder which gave access to the upper regions—"fetch that thing down here! It's the prettiest thing you ever see in your life!" turning to me. And the educated young lady brought down a doleful-looking compound of card-board and many-

coloured waters, which had, it seems, occupied her mind and fingers for some days.

"There!" said the mother, proudly, "a gall that's learnt to make sich baskets as that, a'n't a goin' to be nobody's help, I guess!"

I thought the boast likely to be verified as a prediction, and went my way, crest-fallen and weary. Girl-hunting is certainly among our most formidable "chores."

XXXV.

HOW BOB WENT TO A WASHINGTON BALL, AND WHAT HE DID AFTERWARDS.

Not many days ago, I had the good fortune, or misfortune, whichever you think proper, to be seated in the New York cars directly behind two personages whose conversation was somewhat of the loudest, and therefore, "*nolens volens*," fell upon my ear. One of the gentlemen, who answered to the beautifully euphonious, though brief, appellation of Bob, appeared to be in a slight degree more happy and contented than was exactly consistent with the time of day, only sufficiently so, however, as to make him very talkative, and in high good humour with himself.

I trust my so declaiming will not ruffle the happy temper of the gentleman, nor bring disquiet to his mind; but, on the contrary, should he ever be rash enough to read his story here in print, that it will call up pleasant memories, and cause him to "smile and smile, and be a *smiler* still."

Bob, I imagine from his conversation, considered himself a sporting character: perhaps, he was a retired cabman, living upon the interest of what he owed, and enjoying the delightful society to be found upon the tops of omnibuses on racing days, and also about steam-boat landings. He had been to Washington—for what, I am not prepared to say—maybe under the delusion that there was "a good time coming," and that he would be made state-coachman, or at any rate be allowed to look after Old Whitey. But Bob was disappointed; his friends hadn't stood up to the rack, fodder or no fodder, nor done the clean thing by him, as he feelingly expressed it; and now he

was returning to the good old city of Gotham, disgusted with the world in general, and constant only to his old intimates good liquor and tobacco.

But didn't he have a "bustin' time" in the city of mud and magnificent distances? Didn't he "raise some of them ere stuck-up fellers outen their patent-leathers, and show 'em that he could talk at a mark with the best of 'em?" Well, you'd better believe he did! He went to a ball there too, and the head and front, and t'other end of that, is the tale I would unfold to you.

"Drot the thing!" said Bob. "I didn't want to go to it, nohow. I don't go in for makin' a tetotum of myself, nor for dancin' in any shape, without it is a regular built hoe-down, an' then I'm about—I am! you may bet your life on it. But a lot of fellers said *go*, an' I *did* go, an' what's more, I've just been a goin' ever since, an' makin' about as good time at that as Bryan an' the old lady ever did. An' aint *she* one of 'em! I tell you, Jim, she can pick her feet up faster, an' set 'em down quicker, than—"

"Yes, I know she can," broke in Jim, "but I want to hear about the ball."

"Well, we all started down," continued Bob,—"there was five of us altogether. Bill Simms—you know Bill? Well, Bill, he had the tickets, and put us right through like a thousand o' bricks. There was an almighty big crowd there, but after we'd got our blankets off, and warmed up a little with a plug or two of gin an' sugar, we jist *schashcheyed* in among the gals, and stood up for a dance. Hoop! didn't we put in the big licks? didn't we show 'em how the thing was done? Well, we did, hoss! an' you may jist bet your life them gals was around too! Bless their little souls, they went right into it as if they'd never done nothin' else. One feller come up, an' wanted to pick a muss with me fur takin' his young woman down to supper; 'ger-l-o-n-g!' says I, 'don't come foolin' round here, or I'll have to lam you.' 'You'd better try it on,' says he. So I jist smacked him right across the mouth, an' was a-goin' in, but Bill Simms, he held on to me, an' said there wasn't no use makin' a row; an' the gal she begin to make a fuss, an' said she didn't want to see a fight, and all the fellers came around, so we shook hands an' went out an' took a drink."

According to his own account, Bob continued to crook his legs and his elbow until the hands of watches began to point to the small hours, when he started to gather up his friends, who

were scattered about the room. Like most other individuals in his situation, however, he stumbled against every man but the right one, and at last found himself in the street, where he was seized upon by a negro hackney coachman, who was, if anything, farther gone in the delights of gin and sugar than himself. Him, with true drunken waywardness, he took to his bosom as a very dear friend—hired his hack, went in next door and got a drink, and then solemnly insisted upon the coloured gentleman getting inside and allowing him to tool the animals.

After much affectionate combatting, and arguing of the matter in the most approved congressional style, his sable friend consented to the arrangement, and the door was shut upon him with the slam bang that of course distinguishes the true artist, amid the laughs and hurrahs of the other drivers there assembled.

The night was very dark and foggy, more especially so to Bob, who viewed things with great indistinctness, and had an idea that the lamps were all doubled and perpetually turning round. Besides, he knew nothing of the place or streets, or of where he wanted to go, but "vere's the hodds so long as you're 'appy!" So, after some cursing, swaying backwards and forwards, climbing and scrambling, he gained the box and reins, drew the hickory upon the tired, nodding, and unsuspecting nags, and waked the echoes and the watchmen (very wrong, that latter proceeding) with a regular Third Avenue "g'l-a-n-g!"

"There was a sound of revelry by night"—a sudden springing forward of the astonished horses—a kind of *kersugging* noise inside, and the hack started down the street at a rate considerably over 2:40.*

But I must let Bob speak for himself, unaccustomed as he may be to the business, or, perhaps, he will say I am not dealing fairly with him. I only came on while he was wood-ing up behind the scenes, and now we'll trot him out again.

"'H-a-y! g'lang!' says I, flinging in the gad to kill, and *liftin' 'em over the heavy places!* 'What'er yer 'bout?' An' didn't they go to it? the critters felt a *man* was drivin' 'em, an' they was a puttin' in the biggest licks, an' doin' all they knowed, like Tally-ho and Free-trade comin' in the last quarter! I didn't know where I was a goin', but that didn't make no difference—the nigger was almost skeered to death, hollerin' from the bottom of the coach—'Gorra mighty! massa debil, let me out!' The old hack was a jerkin' an' jumpin' about, when I kinder thought there was something ahead, an' pulled

* *i. e.* A mile in two minutes, forty seconds.

up, jist in time to keep an all-fired big house from runnin' right over us.

"'Hello! Nig, where are we?' says I, gettin' down an' openin' the door—but the darkie couldn't say nothin', for he'd been a joggin' an' bumpin' inside there till the wind was knocked clean outen him. 'S-a-y! where are we?' says I, grabbin' him by the wool, an' pullin' him out.

"'Bless de Lor! massa, le' me up!' hollered the darkie, comin' to a little, and tryin' to get upon his pins—'I dun ax you only half a dollar—s'help me! massa, I dun only ax you half a dollar!'"

"'Drot your half a dollar,' says I, 'who said anything about half a dollar? I want to know where we are.'

"'Gorra mighty! massa, I do no, it am so powerful dark I can't see noffin!'"

"'Hoop!' says I, 'you black imp, if you don't tell me where we are, I'll lam you right outen your hide—I will!'"

"But jist as I hollered 'Hoop!' the horses gave a start, an' the old nigger jerked away from me, an' broke after 'em, as if he never knowed what drunk was.

"Wasn't I in a nice fix then, Jim?—clear away t'other side o' nowhere, an' not knowin' which way to git home! But, thinks I, I'll jist edge up alongside this fence, an' keep straight along till I meet somebody; an' I *did* keep straight along till I got so tired that I went to sleep."

"Did you stay there all night?" asked Jim, smiling.

"Why, I waked up there," answered Bob, demurely, "an' from the looks of one shoulder of my coat, I guess I'd been a walkin' round the Capitol grounds, leanin' against the railin', an' *thinkin' I was a goin' straight up the street all the while!*"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Jim, "but did you see the nigger again?"

"No," answered Bob, "I didn't see him, but I heered two darkies talkin' about him down to the cars. 'You see Jake to-day?' says one. 'Yes, I seed him dis mornin'; he dun git drunk lass night, an' loss his horses, an' de nigger's head so big when he git up, he hab to pull his shirt on ober his feet! Yah! yah! yah!'"

"I come right on, then, Jim, an' I hain't heered nothin' of him since."

XXXVI.

THE GREATEST GOOD OF THE GREATEST NUMBER.

"GENTLEMEN," said the orator, taking off his hat and waving it in a courteous and inviting manner, while he wiped his brow with a faded cotton handkerchief,—“Gentlemen! may I beg your attention for a few moments? You are aware that I do not often draw very largely on your patience, and also that I am not a man who is fond of talking about himself. It is indeed a most unpleasant thing to me to be in a manner forced to advocate my own cause, and nothing short of the desire I feel to have an opportunity of advancing the interest of my friends and neighbours in the legislature would induce me to submit to it.”

Somebody groaned, “Oh, Tim, that’s tough!”

“Yes, gentlemen! as you observe, it *is* tough; it is a thing that always hurts a man’s feelings. But as I was observing, we must go through with whatever is for the good of our country. The greatest good of the greatest number, *I* say!”

By this time the auditory had greatly increased, and comprised indeed nearly all the voters. Mr Rice went on with increasing animation.

“This is the principle to go upon, and if this was only carried out, we should all have been better off long ago. This is where the legislature wants mending. They always stop short of the right mark. They get frightened, gentlemen! yes, frightened,—scar’t! they always have a lot of these small souls among them—souls cut after a scant pattern—souls that are afraid of their own shadows—that object to all measures that would really relieve the people, so they just give the people a taste to keep them quiet, and no more, for fear of what folks a thousand miles off would say! You’ve heard of the jackass that was scar’t at a penny trumpet—well, these jackasses are scar’t at what isn’t louder than a penny trumpet, nor half so loud.”

Here was a laugh, which gave the orator time to moisten his throat from a tumbler handed up by a friend.

“Now you see, gentlemen, nobody would have said a word against that exemption bill, if everybody was as much in favour of the people as I am. I don’t care who knows it, gentlemen, I am in favour of the people. Don’t the people want relief?

And what greater relief can they have than not to be obliged to pay their debts, when they have nothing to pay them with? that is, nothing that they can spare conveniently. I call that measure a half-way measure, gentlemen,—it is a measure that leaves a way open to take a man's property if he happens to have a little laid by—a little of his hard earnings, gentlemen; and you all know what hard earnings are.

"What is the use of having the privilege of making laws if we can't make them to suit ourselves? We might as well be a territory again, instead of a sovereign State, if we are agoing to legislate to favour the people of other States at the expense of our own people. I don't approve of the plan of creditors from other States coming here to take away our property. Folks are very fond of talking about honesty, and good faith, and all that. As to faith they may talk, but I'm more for works; and the man that works hard and can't pay his debts is the one that ought to be helped, in my judgment.

"They'll tell you that the man that sues for a debt is owing to somebody else, and wants his money to pay with. Now, *I* say, he's just the man that ought to feel for the other, and not want to crowd him hard up. Besides, if we pass exemption laws, don't we help him too? Isn't it as broad as it's long?"

A murmur of applause.

"Then as to honesty; where'll you find an honest man if not among the people? and such measures are on purpose to relieve the people. The aristocracy don't like 'em perhaps, but who cares what *they* like? They like nothing but grinding the face of the poor."

Here was a shout of applause, and a long application to the tumbler.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr Rice, "some people talk as if what debts were not paid were lost, but it is no such thing. What one man don't get, t'other keeps; so it's all the same in the long run. Folks ought to be accommodating, and if they are accommodating they won't object to any measures for the relief of the people, and if they don't want to be accommodating, we'll just make 'em, that's all!

"Some say it's bad to keep altering and altering the laws, till nobody knows what the law is. That's a pretty principle, to be sure! what do we have a legislature for, I should be glad to know, if not to make laws? Do we pay them two dollars and fifty cents a day to sit still and do nothing? Look at the last legislature. They did not hold on above two months, and passed rising of two hundred laws, and didn't work o' Sundays

neither! Such men are the men you want, if they'll only carry the laws far enough to do some good.

"Now, gentlemen, I see the poll's open, and I s'pose you want to be off, so I will not detain you much longer. All I have to observe is, that, although I am far from commending myself, I must give you my candid opinion that a certain person who has thrust himself before the public on this occasion is unworthy of the suffrages of a free and enlightened community like this. He's a man that's always talking about doing justice to all, and keeping up the reputation of the State, and a great deal more stuff of the same sort; but it's all humbug! nothing else; and he has an axe of his own to grind, just like the rest of us. And worse than all, gentlemen, as you very well know, he's one of these teetotallers that are trying to coax free-born Americans to sign away their liberty, and make hypocrites of 'em. I'm a man that will never refuse to take a glass of grog with a fellow-citizen because he wears a ragged coat. Liberty and equality, *I* say—Hurrah for liberty and equality! three cheers for liberty and equality, and down with the teetotallers!"

The orator had been so attentive to the tumbler, that the sincerity of the latter part of his speech at least could not be doubted, and indeed his vehemence was such as to alarm Seymour, who felt already somewhat ashamed of the cause he was bound to advocate, and who feared that a few more tumblers would bring Tim to a point which would render his advocacy unavailing. He therefore sought an opportunity of a few moments' private talk with the candidate, and ventured to hint that if he became so enthusiastic that he could not stand, he would have very little chance of sitting in the legislature.

Now, Mr Rice liked not such quiet youths as our friend Seymour, and especially in his present elevated frame did he look down with supreme contempt upon anything in the shape of advice on so delicate a subject, so that Seymour got an answer which by no means increased his zeal in Mr Rice's service, though he still resolved to do his best to fulfil the wishes of Mr Hay.

Rice's conduct throughout the day was in keeping with the beginning which we have described, and such was the disgust with which it inspired Seymour, that he at length concluded to quit the field, and tell Mr Hay frankly that it was impossible for him to further the interests of so unprincipled a candidate.

XXXVII.

ABEL HUCKS IN A TIGHT PLACE.

I WISHES to lay a case before you that I thinks is hard. You see, I was born a poor man, and luck has been agin me ever sense I was born ; and what's worse, the law has been agin me too. I mout have stole several times, and not been found out, but that's agin my prinsipples. I don't see how them as gets rich by stealing can enjoy their riches—I couldn't do it, and so I wouldn't steal. I mout have lugged and loafed about as some does, but I'm above that too ; so I has suffered some in this world, and I allows to suffer some more before I'll either steal or lug. But that's not to the pint—or rather to the *half-pint* : for the worst pint in my case was a *half-pint* to begin with. I s'pose I had drunk about that quantity of the ardent when who should come along but "*Forty-foot Houston*." Now, Mr P., it so happens that I am a *low man* in inches, and I can't bear for one of those tall fellows to be looking over my head at something beyond me. Ses I,

"Mr Houston, look some other course."

Ses he, "What's the matter, Hucks?"

Ses I, "I don't want you to be standin' thar a lookin' over my hed."

"Why," ses he, "Hucks, you are a fool!"

That was enuff ; I had allers wanted to *hit* a tall man, and "*Forty-foot*" was the highest I had ever seen. So I goes up and jags him in the short ribs. Ses he :

"Quit, Hucks !—you are a fool !"

Well, upon that I digs into him agin. Well, then at last Mister Houston gets mad, and takes me by the two arms, and gives me a shake that made my teeth chatter and my eyes strike fire, and he hands me over the fence to a constable, and *he* takes me down to Sabett's cross roads, where the court was held in a masheen (machine) house, and lawyer "Joolus" was employed to defend me. He is a mighty good-harted man, Joolus is, and so is judge Battle that tried me ; but there was no chance for me to get off, and so I 'fesses guilty, and Joolus turns *into* beggin the judge. He said I was a poor unfortunate man, with six children, and a little given to liker ; and there was

no jail nigher than Charlotte, and it would never do to send me to jail.

"Has you got any stocks here?" ses the judge to the sheriff.

"No, sur," ses the sheriff; "this is the second court ever held in the county of Union, and we aint reddy with sich things yet."

Well, I felt a bit of relief when I heard the sheriff's anser, and the judge looked down at a piece of paper, and then he says—

"Mr Clerk, record the judgment of the court. Let Mr Hucks be confined in the stocks for one hour. And," says he, "Mr Sheriff, you can come as near as possible to executing the judgment of the court."

"How is that?" says Joolus, flaring up and looking wrathful at the judge. "Your honour don't mean to inflict any unusual punishment?"

"Oh, no!" says the judge, laffin; "the mode of carrying out the sentence is left to the sheriff."

And then all the lawyers laft, but Joolus—and some said "'fence, Joolus," and so got madder still, and says, "Mr Sheriff, I dare you to do that!"

And so they took me out of the court-house on a general laff, and, as the lawyers came along to dinner, thar I was lying with both legs through the crack of a rail fence, and some fellers setting on the fence making sport of me!

And I heard that queer-looking feller, "Ham Jones," say—"Joolus, *look* at your client!"

And then I thought Joolus would have fainted. He turned to the judge, and he says—"My God, judge! I never had a client in sich a fix before!"

And the judge and all of them lawyers laughed out. But I felt hurt—my feelings was hurt as well as my legs. I don't know whether or not you are a lawyer, but I want to know whether it is accordin' to the American constitution, to put a feller's legs through a rail fence because they haven't got stocks in a new county? I want to know, sir! for ef that be according to the constitution, I'll go across the line to South Carolina and help to make a new constitution.

XXXVIII.

THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE.

THERE may be readers who will suppose the annexed recital to be an exaggeration; but at least three hundred persons who were in the capitol of the State of Mississippi on the third day of March, 1846, can testify that this account falls far short of the reality. The clerks of the house, as in duty bound, entered the report of the member from Greene on the journals; but, on the next morning, it was expunged by the house at the request of the member himself.

The best subject which came before the legislature during the session of 1846, was the all-absorbing one in regard to the charter of "McInnis' ferry." The owner of the ferry was a member—himself being the representative of his county of Greene—where the ferry is located; and through all the trying scenes of getting the charter passed, that honourable representative bore himself in a manner and with a spirit which, to say the least, were remarkable.

On the first broaching of the subject some opposition was made. The representative from Clarke, an adjoining county, conceived that the charter interfered with the rights of other citizens who had ferries on the same river (the Chickasahay), and, on the first reading of the bill, this same representative (Mr Moody) moved its rejection. This motion brought Mr Innis to his feet. He had never spoken before; but in this one effort (his maiden speech) he more than compensated for his former remissness.

"I hope" (said he, addressing the house, but not the speaker), "I hope you will not reject my ferry bill. Gentlemen, *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* Them other men that's got ferries near me aint bound at all. They've got some little trifling flats to git across the river on when they want to go to mill—and when it's convenient for 'em to put a traveller over they do it—and when it aint they don't. But *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* Ask Mr Moody; he knows all about it. He knows I've kept ferry there across the Chickasahay for thirty years past. My ferry's right on the big road to Mobile and everywhere. There's three mails crosses at my ferry. Gentlemen,

I'm bound to keep a ferry. Mr Moody knows I live at Leaks-ville, right at the court-house—and these fellers that keep the other little ferries—they turn my boats loose, and bore auger holes in 'em and sink 'em. I hope, gentlemen, you'll pass my bill. I've just got a letter from my son last night—a telling me that them fellers has been boring more holes in my boat. Gentlemen, *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* I always cross everybody that comes—I'm bound to do it. And I always keep good flats, well painted with tar."

After this appeal and the necessary readings being gone through, the bill passed the house by a large majority, and was sent to the senate.

Here a novel scene occurred—unprecedented, perhaps, in the annals of legislation—even of Mississippi legislation. By a resolution of the senate, the representative from Greene was invited to address that august body upon the merits of his bill, which he did after the manner indicated in the above sketch of his remarks in the house. After the grave senators had sufficiently amused themselves with the matter, they passed the bill. The worthy representative immediately hurried back to his seat in the house; and, although the clerk was reading in the midst of a document, the delighted member exclaimed,

"Mr Speaker, my ferry bill has passed the senate, and I want the house to concur!"

A roar of laughter followed this unique announcement.

As soon as the matter in hand was disposed of, there was an obstreperous call by the house that the gentleman from Greene should be heard in regard to his mission to the other branch in the legislature. Mr McInnis rose and said,

"Mr Speaker, the senate's passed my bill!"

Speaker: "What! have the senate passed your ferry bill?"

McInnis: "Yes, sir; they've passed it."

Speaker: "Well, I'm very glad to hear that the senate have passed the ferry bill of the gentleman from Greene."

Mr McInnis proceeded.

"Mr Speaker, when I went into the senate I told 'em all about my ferry, and some of 'em hopped on my bill."

(Here there were cries of "Who opposed it? Who attacked the ferry bill?")

"Why, sir, Mr Ramsey did, and Mr Labauve, too. Labauve said he was travelling along there once on an electioneering tour, and, like many other politicians, he was out

of money ; and he said I wouldn't set him over at my ferry, because he hadn't no money. I told him, right before the whole senate, it wasn't so."

Speaker: "That Labauve is a dangerous fellow to talk to in that way."

McInnis: "Yes, sir; he said he would throw a glove at me if he had one."

No reporter, whatever his powers be, could do justice to the various scenes which the house and the senate presented in the progress of the above-mentioned events. The crowding of members and visitors around the seat of the *Greene* representative whenever he rose or opened his mouth—the roars of obstreperous mirth—the painful contortions of the speaker's face as he vainly strove to keep himself and the house in an orderly frame. These things all defied description—to say nothing of the greatest curiosity of all—the member from *Greene* himself.

In the course of an hour or so, a message came from the senate, stating, among other acts passed, that they had passed the house bill in regard to the Chickasabay ferry.

The worthy member again rose—

"Mr Speaker," said he, "I hope you'll now let me have the bill to take to the governor to get him to sign it."

Fortunately, the house was now too busy in discussing some other more important matter, or there would have been another convulsive scene. As it was, there was an incontinent burst of laughter, as sudden as it was universal and overwhelming, and then there was a calm again.

Night came—and new fuel was furnished to feed the slumbering embers of that mirth which had nearly consumed the house during the day. In the morning a petition had been presented from Harrison county, by Mr McCaughn, praying the legislature to pass a law providing that lawyers might be elected as other officers are, and compensated out of the State treasury—forbidding them to receive private fees, &c., &c. On this petition a committee had been appointed—including, singularly enough, the member from *Greene*.

Judge then of the surprise of the house at the promptness of Mr McInnis when, at the night session of the very day he was appointed, he rose in his place and made the following report, which, in due form, was read at the clerk's desk ; but was interrupted at the close of every sentence by shouts of applause and merriment, crowded as the hall was by a brilliant array both of ladies and gentlemen :—

THE REPORT

Of Col. Jack McInnis, from the Select Committee that had Mr McCaughn's Lawyer Bill put to 'em.

Now, Mr Speaker, if this house will give me its detention for a few minutes, I think that I can explain this matter.

Mr McCaughn has introduced a great passel of bills here, which is heredical and null and void, and hasn't got no sense in 'em. He put in a bill here to get up a theorological servey of the country, and this my constituents is opposed to, because they think there's no use in it. The people have enough to pay for now that aint of no account. There has been a good deal of 'citement about my ferry bill; and when I had used up Mr Moody, and got it into the senate, Laboo had to git up and say that he was at my ferry wonst, and I refused to set him over the river, because he didn't have no money—and I jest told him what he said warn't so. Now, I don't know much about this Laboo, but I don't think he is the clean cat fur, no how.

I give my vues about the pennytensherry t'other day, and I was right, for the things there does look like they was painted with tar—and I told the truth about it, and you know it.

Now, Mr McCaughn is a man of great larning; he can write equal to any man in this house, and I'm s'prized that as smart a man should have such heredical notions. He wanted to have a law passed here for doing away with securities; but he couldn't get that fixed, and then he wanted to get the law turned so that a man would have to ax his wife when he wanted to go a feller's security. Now, I have worked for my plunder, and I'm opposed to all such sort of laws. The legislater has already passed a law giving a man's wife his plunder, and his hard yearnings, and I believe Mr McCaughn was the cause of it, for it is jest like one of them heredical laws of hizzen, that we have all hearn so much about.

Now, I think this law bill is a rascally bill—for I believe in letting the people get any lawyer he likes, and pay him what he chuses. And if this bill passes, why these heredical candidates would be always treating and fooling the people just to get elected. There is too many rascals as is candidates now, and as sech, I'm agin it.

I'm much obleeched to the legislater for passing my ferry bill. They ought to have passed it, for that man Wally, or somebody else, bored two inch auger holes in my flat, just because I got more ferrying to do than he did; but I've fixed him

now, for I've got the best ferry anyhow; and the senate's agreed to it, for all that fellow Laboo went agin it. And if you'll let me have the bill, I will jest take it right down to the governor to sign it. And I will go and raise my sunk ferry boat, and stop the auger holes, and ferry everybody as travels that way; and I'll take the greatest pleasure in crossing the members of this legislater because they passed my bill. But I'm agin McCaughn's bill anyhow, for it is time to stop all sich heredical doctrines.

XXXIX.

SMOKING A GRIZZLY.

"WHAT, you hev never seen a *live* grizzly?" exclaimed an old Oregon gold-digger, with whom we were engaged in a "*bar*" conversation one evening on Jamestown bar.

"Never," said I, in all seriousness, "it has never been my good fortune to encounter one of the beautiful varmints."

"Well, hoss, when you *do*, perhaps it won't be the pleasantest minit you've ever hed, for thar aint no varmint in these hills, nor any whar else I've ben, that kin kick wuss, either round or sideways, than a full-grown grizzly."

"But you can easily get out of the way of a clumsy animal like that," said I, provoking the old digger into a yarn of his experience in regard to grizzlys.

"Well, when you kin get out of thur way, little feller, I gives you my advice, to get out quicker; for tho' they aint built raal beautiful for runnin, they *lope* awful smart when thur arter a humin critter. I was desperate glad to get away from one myself once."

I had provoked him to the edge of a bar story, and knowing from his manner, that his relation of such an occurrence as getting away from a grizzly would be interesting, I tempted him on.

"Where did you say you fell in with him?" inquired I.

"I didn't say I fell in with him anywhar," answered he; "cuss the varmint, he fell in with me, and I'd a leetle ruther hev fell in with Old Nick jest at that minit. I was over thar, two mile t'other side of the high ridge beyond Sullivan's, lookin' arter that gray mule of mine—and talkin' about wicked

things, jest puts me thinkin' what a detarminedly vicious sarpint that gray mule was! Well, I was huntin' her, and arter runnin' over the hill, and shootin' down half a dozen gulches, I began to get out of wind; and set down to bless that gray critter for the many tramps she had given me. I'll swar no lariat 'ud hold her, not ef it was made of bull-hide an inch thick. I hadn't sot more'n a minit, when I heerd a snort, and a roar, and a growl, and a right smart sprinklin' of fast travelin', all mixed up together. Lookin' up a perpendikelar hill, right behind me, thar I saw comin' my gray mule, puttin' in her best licks, and a few yards behind her was a grizzly, not much bigger than a *yearling*. Many an infernal scrape that mule has taken me into afore, but this was rather the tightest place she ever did get me into. I hadn't a weepun about me, 'cept one of those mean, one-barreled auction pistols; and that hadn't a consarned mite of a load in, and I hadn't nothing to load it with, and no time to put it in, ef I had; and ef it had been loaded it wouldn't hev been worth a cuss!

You had better believe, boys, that my skin got moist suddint—thar waren't no dry diggins under my red shirt, long afore that grizzly got down the hill. The infarnal mule no sooner seed me than she jest wheeled round and put me atween her and the bar, and stood off to see ef I wouldn't lick him about as easy as I used to whale her when she got stubborn. Old grizzly drawed up when he seed me, and 'gin to roll his old barrel head about, and grunt, as ef I was mor'n he bargained for; and I'd jest given him that mule, easy, to hev got off square. As the fellers say at monte, he was a lay out I didn't want to bet on.

I commenced backin' out, and wanted to make it a draw game; but he kept shufflin' up to me, and any feller who had been close to his head, would hev giv his whole pile just to get a chance to *cut*. I considered my effects—that pan, rocker, and crow-bar—jest as good as ministered upon; and almost felt the coroner sittin' on my body. I stuck my hands into my pockets to see if there warn't a knife about me, and I pulled out half a dozen boxes of *lucifer matches*, that had just been bought that afternoon. I don't know what put it in my head, but I sot a box blazin', an' held it out towards old grizzly, and I reckon you havn't often seen two eyes stick out wusser than his did then. He drew back at least ten yards, and settin' the box down on the airth, I jest moved off about twenty yards, in t'other direction. The bar crept up to the lucifers and took a smell, and if the muscles of my jaws hadn't been so tight with

fear, I'd hev bursted into a reg'lar snort of laughin' at seein' how he turned up his nose and sniffled. The next minit he retreated at least fifty yards; and then I sot another box of the lucifers, and—boys, dar you b'lieve it—he gin to *back out*! As soon as I felt I had him skeert, I didn't keer a cuss for a whole drove of grizzlys. I jerked out another box of lucifers, teeched it off, and let out the most onairthly yell that ever woke those diggins, and the way that bar broke into a canter 'ud hev distanced any quarter nag in Christendom! He jest seemed to think that anythin' that could fire up as easy, and smell as bad as me, war rather a delicate subject to kick up a row with. As he was gettin' over the hill, I fairly squeeled out laughin', and I'll swar ef that impudent mule—which was standin' behind me—didn't snicker out too! I looked for a rock to hit her—instead of ketchin her to ride to camp—and the ungrateful critter sot right off in a trot, and left me to walk! I made short time atween that ravine and my tent; for I was awful feer'd that my grizzly was waitin' some place to take a second look at me, and might bring a few older varmints along to get their opinion what kind of critter I wur.

Ah, boys! (said he in conclusion) Providence has helped me out of many a scrape; but it warn't him saved me from the grizzly! Ef it hadn't ben old Satan, or some Dutchman, invented brimstone and lucifer matches, thar would hev been an end to this critter, and the verdict would hev been—*Died of a Grizzly*.

XL.

THE BEE-TREE.

AMONG the various settlers of the wide west, there is no class which exhibits more striking peculiarities than that which, in spite of hard work, honesty, and sobriety, still continues hopelessly poor. None find more difficulty in the solution of the enigma presented by this state of things, than the sufferers themselves; and it is with some bitterness of spirit that they come at last to the conclusion, that the difference between their own condition and that of their prosperous neighbours, is entirely owing to their own "bad luck;" while the prosperous neighbours look musingly at the ragged children and

squalid wife, and regret that the head of the house "ha'n't no faculty." Perhaps neither view is quite correct.

In the very last place one would have selected for a dwelling—in the centre of a wide expanse of low, marshy land—on a swelling knoll, which looks like an island—stands the forlorn dwelling of my good friend Silas Ashburn, one of the most conspicuous victims of the "bad luck" alluded to. Silas was among the earliest settlers of our part of the country, and had half a county to choose from when he "located" in the swamp—half a county of as beautiful dale and upland as can be found in the vicinity of the great lakes. But he says there is "very first-rate of pasturing" for his cows (and well there may be, on forty acres of wet grass!); and as for the agues which have nearly made skeletons of himself and his family, his opinion is that it would not have made a bit of difference if he had settled on the highest land in Michigan, since "everybody knows if you've got to have ague, why you've got to, and all the high land and dry land, and *Queen Ann** in the world, wouldn't make no odds."

Silas does not get rich, nor even comfortably well off, although he works, as he says, "like a tiger." This he thinks is because "rich folks aint willing poor folks should live," and because he in particular always has such bad luck. Why shouldn't he make money? Why should he not have a farm as well stocked, a house as well supplied, and a family as well clothed and cared for in all respects, as his old neighbour John Dean, who came with him from "York State"? Dean has never speculated, nor hunted, nor fished, nor found honey, nor sent his family to pick berries for sale. All these has Silas done, and more. His family have worked hard; they have worn their old clothes till they well nigh dropped off; many a day, nay, month, has passed, seeing potatoes almost their sole sustenance; and all this time Dean's family had plenty of everything they wanted, and Dean just jogged on, as easy as could be; hardly ever stirring from home, except on 'lection days; wasting a great deal of time, too (so Silas thinks), "helping the women folks." "But some people get all the luck."

These and similar reflections seem to be scarcely ever absent from the mind of Silas Ashburn, producing any but favourable results upon his character and temper. He cannot be brought to believe that Dean has made more money by splitting rails in the winter than his more enterprising neigh-

* Quinine.

bour by hunting deer, skilful and successful as he is. He will not notice that Dean often buys his venison for half the money he has earned while Silas was hunting it. He has never observed, that while his own sallow helpmate goes barefoot and bonnetless to the brush-heap to fill her ragged apron with miserable fuel, the cold wind careering through her scanty covering, Mrs Dean sits by a good fire, amply provided by her careful husband, patching for the twentieth time his great overcoat; and that by the time his Betsey has kindled her poor blaze, and sits cowering over it, shaking with ague, Mrs Dean, with well-swept hearth, is busied in preparing her husband's comfortable supper.

These things Silas does not and will not see; and he ever resents fiercely any hint, however kindly and cautiously given, that the steady exercise of his own ability for labour, and a *little* more thrift on the part of his wife, would soon set all things right. When he spends a whole night "coon-hunting," and is obliged to sleep half the next day, and feels good for nothing the day after, it is impossible to convince him that the "varmint" had better been left to cumber the ground, and the two or three dollars that the expedition cost him been bestowed in the purchase of a blanket.

"A blanket!" he would exclaim angrily; "don't be puttin' sich uppish notions into my folks' heads! Let 'em make comfortables out o' their old gowns, and if that don't do, let 'em sleep in their day-clothes, as I do! Nobody needn't suffer with a great fire to sleep by."

The children of this house are just what one would expect from such training. Labouring beyond their strength at such times as it suits their father to work, they have nevertheless abundant opportunity for idleness; and, as the mother scarcely attempts to control them, they usually lounge listlessly by the fireside, or bask in the sunshine, when Ashburn is absent; and, as a natural consequence of this irregular mode of life, the whole family are frequently prostrate with agues, suffering every variety of wretchedness, while there is perhaps no other case of disease in the neighbourhood. Then comes the two-fold evil of a long period of inactivity, and a proportionately long doctor's bill; and as Silas is strictly honest, and means to wrong no man of his due, the scanty comforts of the convalescents are cut down to almost nothing, and their recovery sadly delayed, that the heavy expenses of illness may be provided for. This is some of poor Ashburn's "bad luck."

One of the greatest temptations to our friend Silas, and to

most of his class, is a bee-hunt. Neither deer, nor 'coons, nor prairie-hens, nor even bears, prove half as powerful enemies to anything like regular business, as do these little thrifty vagrants of the forest. The slightest hint of a bee-tree will entice Silas Ashburn and his sons from the most profitable job of the season, even though the defection is sure to result in entire loss of the offered advantage; and if the hunt prove successful, the luscious spoil is generally too tempting to allow of any care for the future, so long as the "sweet'nin'" can be persuaded to last. "It costs nothing," will poor Mrs Ashburn observe, "let 'em enjoy it. It isn't often we have such good luck." As to the cost, close computation might lead to a different conclusion; but the Ashburns are no calculators.

It was on one of the lovely mornings of our ever-lovely autumn, so early that the sun had scarcely touched the tops of the still-verdant forest, that Silas Ashburn and his eldest son sallied forth for a day's chopping on the newly-purchased land of a rich settler, who had been but a few months among us. The tall form of the father, lean and gaunt as the very image of *Famine*, derived little grace from the rags which streamed from the elbows of his almost sleeveless coat, or flapped round the tops of his heavy boots, as he strode across the long causeway that formed the communication from his house to the dry land. Poor Joe's costume showed, if possible, a still greater need of the aid of that useful implement the needle. His mother is one who thinks little of the ancient proverb which commends the stitch in time; and the clothing under her care sometimes falls in pieces, seam by seam, for want of the occasional aid which is rendered more especially necessary by the slightness of the original sewing; so that the brisk breeze of the morning gave the poor boy no faint resemblance to a tall young aspen,

"With all its leaves fast fluttering, all at once."

The little conversation which passed between the father and son was such as necessarily makes up much of the talk of the poor,—turning on the difficulties and disappointments of life, and the expedients by which there may seem some slight hope of eluding these disagreeables.

"If we hadn't had sich bad luck this summer," said Mr Ashburn, "losing that heifer, and the pony, and them three hogs,—all in that plaguey spring-hole too,—I thought to have bought that timbered forty of Dean. It would have squared out my farm jist about right."

"The pony didn't die in the spring-hole, father," said Joe.

"No, he did not, but he got his death there, for all. He never stopped shiverin' from the time he fell in. *You* thought he had the agur, but I know'd well enough what ailded him; but I wasn't a goin' to let Dean know, because he'd ha' thought himself so blam'd cunning, after all he'd said to me about that spring-hole. If the agur could kill, Joe, we'd all ha' been dead long ago."

Joe sighed,—a sigh of assent. They walked on musingly.

"This is going to be a good job of Keene's," continued Mr Ashburn, turning to a brighter theme, as they crossed the road and struck into the "timbered land," on their way to the scene of the day's operations. "He has bought three eighties, all lying close together, and he'll want as much as one forty cleared right off; and I've a good notion to take the fencin' of it as well as the choppin'. He's got plenty of money; and they say he don't shave quite so close as some. But I tell you, Joe, if I do take the job, you must turn to like a catamount, for I aint a-going to make a nigger o' myself, and let my children do nothing but eat."

"Well, father," responded Joe, whose pale face gave token of anything but high living, "I'll do what I can; but you know I never work two days at choppin' but what I have the agur like sixty,—and a feller can't work when he's got the agur."

"Not while the fit's on, to be sure," said the father; "but I've worked many an afternoon after my fit was over, when my head felt as big as a half-bushel, and my hands would ha' sizzed if I'd put 'em in water. Poor folks has got to work—but, Joe! if there isn't bees, by golley! I wonder if anybody's been a baitin' for 'em? Stop! hush! watch which way they go!"

And with breathless interest—forgetful of all troubles, past, present, and future—they paused to observe the capricious wheelings and flittings of the little cluster, as they tried every flower on which the sun shone, or returned again and again to such as suited best their discriminating taste. At length, after a weary while, one suddenly rose into the air with a loud whizz, and after balancing a moment on a level with the tree-tops, darted off, like a well-sent arrow, towards the east, followed instantly by the whole busy company, till not a loiterer remained.

"Well! if this isn't luck!" exclaimed Ashburn, exultingly; "they make right for Keene's land! We'll have 'em! go ahead, Joe, and keep your eye on 'em!"

Joe obeyed so well in both points that he not only outran

his father, but very soon turned a sunset over a gnarled root or *grub* which lay in his path. The *faux pas* nearly demolished one side of his face, and what remained of his jacket sleeve, while his father, not quite so heedless, escaped falling, but tore his boot almost off with what he called "a contwisted stub of the toe."

But these were trifling inconveniences, and only taught them to use a little more caution in their eagerness. They followed on unweariedly; crossed several fences, and threaded much of Mr Keene's tract of forest land, scanning with practised eye every decayed tree, whether standing or prostrate, until at length, in the side of a gigantic but leafless oak, they espied, some forty feet from the ground, the "sweet home" of the immense swarm whose scouts had betrayed their hiding-place.

"The Indians have been here," said Ashburn; "you see they've felled this saplin' agin the bee-tree, so as they could climb up the hole; but the red devils have been disturbed before they had time to dig it out. If they'd had axes to cut down the big tree, they wouldn't have left a smitchin o' honey, they're such tarnal thieves!"

Mr Ashburn's ideas of morality were much shocked at the thought of the dishonesty of the Indians, who, as is well known, have no rights of any kind; but considering himself as first finder, the lawful proprietor of this much-coveted treasure, gained too without the trouble of a protracted search, or the usual amount of baiting, and burning of honey-combs, he lost no time in taking possession after the established mode.

To cut his initials with his axe on the trunk of the bee-tree, and to make *blazes* on several of the trees he had passed, to serve as way-marks to the fortunate spot, detained him but a few minutes; and with many a cautious noting of the surrounding localities, and many a charge to Joe "not to say nothing to nobody," Silas turned his steps homeward, musing on the important fact that he had had good luck for once, and planning important business quite foreign to the day's chopping.

Now it so happened that Mr Keene, who is a restless old gentleman, and, moreover, quite green in the dignity of a land-holder, thought proper to turn his horse's head, for this particular morning ride, directly towards these same "three eighties," on which he had engaged Ashburn and his son to commence the important work of clearing. Mr Keene is low of stature, rather globular in contour, and exceedingly parrot-nosed; wearing, moreover, a face red enough to lead one to suppose

he had made his money as a dealer in claret, but, in truth, one of the kindest of men, in spite of a little quickness of temper. He is profoundly versed in the art and mystery of store-keeping, and as profoundly ignorant of all that must sooner or later be learned by every resident land-owner of the western country.

Thus much being premised, we shall hardly wonder that our good old friend felt exceedingly aggrieved at meeting Silas Ashburn and the "lang-legged chiel" Joe (who has grown longer with every shake of ague), on his way *rom* his tract, instead of *to* it.

"What in the world's the matter now?" began Mr Keene, rather testily. "Are you never going to begin that work?"

"I don't know but I shall," was the cool reply of Ashburn; "I can't begin to-day, though."

"And why not, pray, when I've been so long waiting?"

"Because I've got something else that must be done first. You don't think your work is all the work there is in the world, do you?"

Mr Keene was almost too angry to reply, but he made an effort to say, "When am I to expect you, then?"

"Why, I guess we'll come on in a day or two, and then I'll bring both the boys."

So saying, and not dreaming of having been guilty of an incivility, Mr Ashburn passed on, intent only on his bee-tree.

Mr Keene could not help looking after the ragged pair for a moment, and he muttered angrily as he turned away, "Ay! pride and beggary go together in this confounded new country! You feel very independent, no doubt, but I'll try if I can't find somebody that wants money."

And Mr Keene's pony, as if sympathizing with his master's vexation, started off at a sharp, passionate trot, which he had learned, no doubt, under the habitual influence of the spicy temper of his rider.

To find labourers who wanted money, or who would own that they wanted it, was at that time no easy task. Our poorer neighbours have been so little accustomed to value household comforts, that the opportunity to obtain them presents but feeble incitement to that continuous industry which is usually expected of one who works in the employ of another. However, it happened in this case that Mr Keene's star was in the ascendant, and the woods resounded ere long under the sturdy strokes of several choppers.

The Ashburns, in the mean time, set themselves busily at

work to make due preparations for the expedition which they had planned for the following night. They felt, as does every one who finds a bee-tree in this region, that the prize was their own—that nobody else had the slightest claim to its rich stores ; yet the gathering in of the spoils was to be performed, according to the invariable custom where the country is much settled, in the silence of night, and with every precaution of secrecy. This seems inconsistent, yet such is the fact.

The remainder of the “lucky” day, and the whole of the succeeding one, passed in scooping troughs for the reception of the honey,—tedious work at best, but unusually so in this instance, because several of the family were prostrate with the ague. Ashburn’s anxiety lest some of his customary bad luck should intervene between discovery and possession, made him more impatient and harsh than usual ; and the interior of that comfortless cabin would have presented to a chance visitor, who knew not of the golden hopes which cheered its inmates, an aspect of unmitigated wretchedness. Mrs Ashburn sat almost in the fire, with a tattered hood on her head, and the relics of a bed-quilt wrapped about her person ; while the emaciated limbs of the baby on her lap,—two years old, yet unweaned,—seemed almost to reach the floor, so preternaturally were they lengthened by the stretches of a four months’ ague. Two of the boys lay in the trundle-bed, which was drawn as near to the fire as possible ; and every spare article of clothing that the house afforded was thrown over them, in the vain attempt to warm their shivering frames. “Stop your whimperin’, can’t ye !” said Ashburn, as he hewed away with hatchet and jack-knife ; “you’ll be hot enough before long.” And when the fever came his words were more than verified.

Two nights had passed before the preparations were completed. Ashburn and such of his boys as could work had laboured indefatigably at the troughs, and Mrs Ashburn had thrown away the milk, and the few other stores which cumbered her small supply of household utensils, to free as many as possible for the grand occasion. This third day had been “well day” to most of the invalids, and, after the moon had risen to light them through the dense wood, the family set off, in high spirits, on their long, dewy walk. They had passed the causeway, and were turning from the highway into the skirts of the forest, when they were accosted by a stranger, a young man in a hunter’s dress, evidently a traveller, and one who knew nothing of the place or its inhabitants, as Mr Ashburn ascertained, to his entire satisfaction, by the usual number of queries.

The stranger, a handsome youth of one or two and twenty, had that frank joyous air which takes so well with us wolverines; and after he had fully satisfied our bee-hunter's curiosity, he seemed disposed to ask some questions in his turn. One of the first of these related to the moving cause of the procession and their voluminous display of *containers*.

"Why, we're goin' straight to a bee-tree that I lit upon two or three days ago, and if you've a mind to, you may go 'long, and welcome. It's a real peeler, I tell ye! There's a hundred and fifty weight of honey in it, if there's a pound."

The young traveller waited no second invitation. His light knapsack was but small encumbrance, and he took upon himself the weight of several troughs, that seemed too heavy for the weaker members of the expedition. They walked on at a rapid and steady pace for a good half-hour, over paths which were none of the smoothest, and only here and there lighted by the moonbeams. The mother and children were but ill-fitted for the exertion, but Aladdin, on his midnight way to the wondrous vault of treasure, would as soon have thought of complaining of fatigue.

Who shall describe the astonishment, the almost breathless rage of Silas Ashburn,—the bitter disappointment of the rest,—when they found, instead of the bee-tree, a great gap in the dense forest, and the bright moon shining on the shattered fragments of the immense oak that had contained their prize? The poor children, fainting with toil now that the stimulus was gone, threw themselves on the ground; and Mrs Ashburn, seating her wasted form on a huge branch, burst into tears.

"It's all one!" exclaimed Ashburn, when at length he could find words; "it's all alike! this is just my luck! It aint none of my neighbours' work, though! They know better than to be so mean! It's the rich! Them that begrudges the poor man the breath of life!" And he cursed bitterly and with clenched teeth whoever had robbed him of his right.

"Don't cry, Betsy," he continued; "let's go home. I'll find out who has done this, and I'll let 'em know there's a law for the poor man as well as the rich. Come along, young 'uns, and stop your blubberin', and let them splinters alone!" The poor little things were trying to gather up some of the fragments to which the honey still adhered, but their father was too angry to be kind.

"Was the tree on your own land?" now inquired the young stranger, who had stood by in sympathizing silence during this scene.

"No! but that don't make any difference. The man that found it first, and marked it, had a right to it afore the president of the United States, and that I'll let 'em know, if it costs me my farm. It's on old Keene's land, and I shouldn't wonder if the old miser had done it himself,—but I'll let him know what's the law in Michigan!"

"Mr Keene a miser!" exclaimed the young stranger, rather hastily.

"Why, what do *you* know about him?"

"O! nothing!—that is, nothing very particular—but I have heard him well spoken of. What I was going to say was, that I fear you will not find the law able to do anything for you. If the tree was on another person's property——"

"Property! that's just so much as you know about it!" replied Ashburn, angrily. "I tell ye I know the law well enough, and I know the honey was mine—and old Keene shall know it too, if he's the man that stole it."

The stranger politely forbore further reply, and the whole party walked on in sad silence till they reached the village road, when the young stranger left them with a kindly "good-night!"

It was soon after an early breakfast on the morning which succeeded poor Ashburn's disappointment, that Mr Keene, attended by his lovely orphan niece Clarissa Bensley, was engaged in his little court-yard, tending with paternal care the brilliant array of autumnal flowers which graced its narrow limits. Beds, in size and shape nearly resembling patty-pans, were filled to overflowing with dahlias, china-asters, and marigolds, while the walks which surrounded them, daily "swept with a woman's neatness," set off to the best advantage these resplendent children of Flora. A vine-hung porch, that opened upon the miniature Paradise, was lined with bird-cages of all sizes, and on a yard-square grass-plot stood the tin cage of a squirrel, almost too fat to be lively.

Mr Keene was childless, and consoled himself, as childless people are apt to do if they are wise, by taking into favour, in addition to his destitute niece, as many troublesome pets as he could procure. His wife, less philosophical, expended her superfluous energies upon a multiplication of household cares which her ingenuity alone could have devised within a domain like a nut-shell. Such rubbing and polishing—such arranging and re-arranging of useless nick-nacks, had never yet been known in these utilitarian regions. And, what seemed amusing enough, Mrs Keene, whose time passed in laborious nothings, often reproved her lawful lord very sharply for wasting

his precious hours upon birds and flowers, squirrels and guinea-pigs, to say nothing of the turkeys and the magnificent peacock, which screamed at least half of every night, so that his master was fain to lock him up in an outhouse, for fear the neighbours should kill him in revenge for the murder of their sleep. These forms of solace Mrs Keene often condemned as "really ridic'lous," yet she cleaned the bird-cages with indefatigable punctuality, and seemed never happier than when polishing with anxious care the bars of the squirrel's tread-mill. But there was one never-dying subject of debate between this worthy couple—the company and services of the fair Clarissa, who was equally the darling of both, and superlatively useful in every department which claimed the attention of either. How the maiden, light-footed as she was, ever contrived to satisfy both uncle and aunt, seemed really mysterious. It was, "Mr Keene, don't keep Clary wasting her time there when I've *so-much* to do!"—or, on the other hand, "My dear! do send Clary out to help *me* a little! I'm sure she's been stewing there long enough!" And Clary, though she could not perhaps be in two places at once, certainly accomplished as much as if she could.

On the morning of which we speak, the young lady, having risen very early, and brushed and polished to her aunt's content, was now busily engaged in performing the various behests of her uncle, a service much more to her taste. She was as completely at home among birds and flowers as a poet or a Peri; and not Ariel himself (of whom I dare say she had never heard) accomplished with more grace his gentle spiriting. After all was "perform'd to point,"—when no dahlia remained unsupported,—no cluster of many-hued asters without its neat hoop,—when no intrusive weed could be discerned, even through Mr Keene's spectacles,—Clarissa took the opportunity to ask if she might take the pony for a ride,—

"To see those poor Ashburns, uncle."

"They're a lazy impudent set, Clary."

"But they are all sick, uncle; almost every one of the family down with ague. Do let me go and carry them something. I hear they are completely destitute of comforts."

"And so they ought to be, my dear," said Mr Keene, who could not forget what he considered Ashburn's impertinence.

But his habitual kindness prevailed, and he concluded his remonstrance (after giving voice to some few remarks which would not have gratified the Ashburns particularly) by saddling the pony himself, arranging Clarissa's riding-dress with all the assiduity of a gallant cavalier, and giving into her hand, with

her neat silver-mounted whip, a little basket, well crammed by his wife's kind care with delicacies for the invalids. No wonder that he looked after her with pride as she rode off! There are few prettier girls than the bright-eyed Clarissa.

When the pony reached the log-causeway, just where the thick copse of witch-hazel skirts Mr Ashburn's moist domain, some unexpected occurrence is said to have startled, not the sober pony, but his very sensitive rider; and it has been asserted that the pony stirred not from the said hazel screen for a longer time than it would take to count a hundred very deliberately. What faith is to be attached to this rumour, the historian ventures not to determine. It may be relied on as a fact, however, that a strong arm led the pony over the slippery corduroy, but no further; for Clarissa Bensley cantered alone up the green slope which leads to Mr Ashburn's door.

"How are you this morning, Mrs Ashburn?" asked the young visitant as she entered the wretched den, her little basket on her arm, her sweet face all flushed, and her eyes more than half suffused with tears, the effect of the keen morning wind, we suppose.

"Law sakes alive!" was the reply, "I aint no how. I'm clear tuckered out with these young 'uns. They have had the agur already this morning, and they're as cross as bear cubs."

"Ma!" screamed one, as if in confirmation of the maternal remark, "I want some tea!"

"Tea! I ha'n't got no tea, and you know that well enough!"

"Well, give me a piece o' sweetcake then, and a pickle."

"The sweetcake has gone long ago, and I ha'n't nothing to make more—so shut your head!" and as Clarissa whispered to the poor pallid child that she would bring him some if he would be a good boy and not tease his mother, Mrs Ashburn produced, from a parcel of similar delicacies, a yellow cucumber, something less than a foot long, "pickled" in whiskey and water—and this the child began devouring eagerly.

Miss Bensley now set out upon the table the varied contents of her basket. "This honey," she said, showing some as limpid as water, "was found a day or two ago in uncle's woods—wild honey—isn't it beautiful?"

Mrs Ashburn fixed her eyes on it without speaking, but her husband, who just then came in, did not command himself so far. "Where did you say you got that honey?" he asked.

"In our woods," repeated Clarissa; "I never saw such

quantities; and a good deal of it as clear and beautiful as this."

"I thought as much!" said Ashburn angrily; "and now, Clara Bensley," he added, "you'll just take that cursed honey back to your uncle, and tell him to keep it, and eat it, and I hope it will choke him! and if I live, I'll make him rue the day he ever touched it."

Miss Bensley gazed on him, lost in astonishment. She could think of nothing but that he had gone suddenly mad, and this idea made her instinctively hasten her steps towards the pony.

"Well! if you won't take it I'll send it after ye!" cried Ashburn, who had lashed himself into a rage; and he hurled the little jar, with all the force of his powerful arm, far down the path by which Clarissa was about to depart, while his poor wife tried to restrain him with a piteous "Oh, father! don't! don't!"

Then, recollecting himself a little,—for he was far from being habitually brutal,—he made an awkward apology to the frightened girl.

"I ha'n't nothing agin *you*, Miss Bensley; you've always been kind to me and mine; but that old devil of an uncle of yours, that can't bear to let a poor man live,—I'll larn him who he's got to deal with! Tell him to look out, for he'll have reason!"

He held the pony while Clarissa mounted, as if to atone for his rudeness to herself; but he ceased not to repeat his denunciations against Mr Keene as long as she was within hearing. As she paced over the logs, Ashburn, his rage much cooled by this ebullition, stood looking after her.

"I swan!" he exclaimed; "if there aint that very feller that went with us to the bee-tree, leading Clary Bensley's horse over the cross-way!"

Clarissa felt obliged to repeat to her uncle the rude threats which had so much terrified her; and it needed but this to confirm Mr Keene's suspicious dislike of Ashburn, whom he had already learned to regard as one of the worst specimens of western character that had yet crossed his path. He had often felt the vexations of his new position to be almost intolerable, and was disposed to imagine himself the predestined victim of all the ill-will and all the impositions of the neighbourhood. It unfortunately happened, about this particular time, that he had been more than usually visited with disasters which are too common in a new country to be much regarded by those who

know what they mean. His fences had been thrown down, his corn-field robbed, and even the lodging-place of the peacock forcibly attempted. But from the moment he discovered that Ashburn had a grudge against him, he thought neither of unruly oxen, mischievous boys, nor exasperated neighbours, but concluded that the one unlucky house in the swamp was the ever-welling fountain of all this bitterness. He had not yet been long enough among us to discern how much our "bark is waur than our bite."

And, more unfortunate still, from the date of this unlucky morning call (I have long considered morning calls particularly unlucky), the fair Clarissa seemed to have lost all her sprightliness. She shunned her usual haunts, or if she took a walk, or a short ride, she was sure to return sadder than she went. Her uncle noted the change immediately, but forbore to question her, though he pointed out the symptoms to his more obtuse lady with a request that she would "find out what Clary wanted." In the performance of this delicate duty, Mrs Keene fortunately limited herself to the subjects of health and new clothes,—so that Clarissa, though at first a little fluttered, answered very satisfactorily without stretching her conscience.

"Perhaps it's young company, my dear," continued the good woman; "to be sure there's not much of that as yet; but you never seemed to care for it when we lived at L——. You used to sit as contented over your work or your book, in the long evenings, with nobody but your uncle and me, and Charles Darwin—why can't you now?"

"So I can, dear aunt," said Clarissa; and she spoke the truth so warmly that her aunt was quite satisfied.

It was on a very raw and gusty evening, not long after the occurrences we have noted, that Mr Keene, with his handkerchief carefully wrapped round his chin, sallied forth after dark, on an expedition to the post-office. He was thinking how vexatious it was—how like everything else in this disorganized, or rather unorganized new country, that the weekly mail should not be obliged to arrive at regular hours, and those early enough to allow of one's getting one's letters before dark. As he proceeded he became aware of the approach of two persons, and, though it was too dark to distinguish faces, he heard distinctly the dreaded tones of Silas Ashburn.

"No! I found you were right enough there! I couldn't get at him that way; but I'll pay him for it yet!"

He lost the reply of the other party in this iniquitous scheme, in the rushing of the wild wind which hurried him on

his course ; but he had heard enough ! He made out to reach the office, and receiving his paper, and hastening desperately homeward, had scarcely spirits enough even to read the price-current (though he did mechanically glance at that corner of the "Trumpet of Commerce"), before he retired to bed in meditative sadness ; feeling quite unable to await the striking of nine on the kitchen clock, which, on all ordinary occasions, "toll'd the hour for retiring."

It is really surprising the propensity which young people have for sitting up late ! Here was Clarissa Bensley, who was so busy all day that one would have thought she might be glad to retire with the chickens,—here she was, sitting in her aunt's great rocking-chair by the remains of the kitchen fire, at almost ten o'clock at night ! And such a night too ! The very roaring of the wind was enough to have affrighted a stouter heart than hers, yet she scarcely seemed even to hear it ! And how lonely she must have been ! Mr and Mrs Keene had been gone an hour, and in all the range of bird-cages that lined the room, not a feather was stirring, unless it might have been the green eyebrow of an old parrot, who was slily watching the fireside with one optic, while the other pretended to be fast asleep. And what was old Poll watching ? We shall be obliged to tell tales.

There was another chair besides the great rocking-chair—a high-backed chair of the olden time ; and this second chair was drawn up quite near the first, and on the back of the tall antiquity leaned a young gentleman. This must account for Clary's not being terrified, and for the shrewd old parrot's staring so knowingly.

"I will wait no longer," said the stranger, in a low but very decided tone (and as he speaks, we recognize the voice of the young hunter). "You are too timid, Clarissa, and you don't do your uncle justice. To be sure he was most unreasonably angry when we parted, and I am ashamed to think that I was angry too. To-morrow I will see him and tell him so ; and I shall tell him too, little trembler, that I have you on my side ; and we shall see if together we cannot persuade him to forget and forgive."

This, and much more that we shall not betray, was said by the tall young gentleman, who, now that his cap was off, showed brow and eyes such as are apt to go a good way in convincing young ladies ; while Miss Bensley seemed partly to acquiesce, and partly to cling to her previous fears of her uncle's resentment against his former protégé, which, first excited by some

trifling offence, had been rendered serious by the pride of the young man and the pepperiness of the old one.

When the moment came which Clarissa insisted should be the very last of the stranger's stay, some difficulty occurred in unbolting the kitchen door, and Miss Bensley proceeded with her guest through an open passage-way to the front part of the house, when she undid the front door, and dismissed him with a strict charge to tie up the gate just as he found it, lest some unlucky chance should realize Mr Keene's fears of nocturnal invasion. And we must leave our perplexed heroine standing, in meditative mood, candle in hand, in the very centre of the little parlour, which served both for entrance-hall and *salon*.

We have seen that Mr Keene's nerves had received a terrible shock on this fated evening, and it is certain that, for a man of sober imagination, his dreams were terrific. He saw Ashburn, covered from crown to sole with a buzzing shroud of bees, trampling on his flower-beds, tearing up his honey-suckles root and branch, and letting his canaries and Java sparrows out of their cages; and, as his eyes recoiled from this horrible scene, they encountered the shambling form of Joe, who, besides aiding and abetting in these enormities, was making awful strides, axe in hand, towards the sanctuary of the pea-fowls.

He awoke with a cry of horror, and found his bed-room full of smoke. Starting up in agonized alarm, he awoke Mrs Keene, and half-dressed by the red light which glimmered around them, they rushed together to Clarissa's chamber. It was empty. To find the stairs was the next thought, but at the very top they met the dreaded bee-finder armed with a prodigious club!

"Oh mercy! don't murder us," shrieked Mrs Keene, falling on her knees; while her husband, whose capsicum was completely roused, began pummelling Ashburn as high as he could reach, bestowing on him at the same time, in no very choice terms, his candid opinion as to the propriety of setting people's houses on fire, by way of revenge.

"Why, you're both as crazy as loons!" was Mr Ashburn's polite exclamation, as he held Mr Keene at arm's length. "I was comin' up o' purpose to tell you that you needn't be frightened. It's only the ruff o' the shanty there,—the kitchen as you call it."

"And what have you done with Clarissa?"—"Ay! where's my niece?" cried the distracted pair.

"Where is she? why down-stairs to be sure, takin' care o' the traps they throw'd out o' the shanty. I was out a 'coon-hunting, and see the light, but I was so far off that they'd got it pretty well down before I got here. That 'ere young spark o' Clary's worked like a beaver, I tell ye!"

It must be supposed that one half of Ashburn's hasty explanation "penetrated the interior" of his hearers' heads. They took in the idea of Clary's safety, but as for the rest, they concluded it only an effort to mystify them as to the real cause of the disaster.

"You need not attempt," solemnly began Mr Keene, "you need not think to make me believe, that you're not the man that set my house on fire. I know your revengeful temper; I have heard of your threats, and you shall answer for all, sir! before you are a day older!"

Ashburn seemed struck dumb, between his involuntary respect for Mr Keene's age and character, and the contemptuous anger with which his accusations filled him. "Well! I swan!" said he, after a pause; "but here's Clary; *she's* got common sense; ask her how the fire happened."

"It's all over now, uncle," she exclaimed, almost breathless; "it has not done so *very* much damage."

"Damage!" said Mrs Keene, dolefully; "we shall never get things clean again while the world stands!"

"And where are my birds?" inquired the old gentleman.

"All safe—quite safe; we moved them into the parlour."

"We! who, pray?"

"Oh! the neighbours came, you know, uncle; and—Mr Ashburn—"

"Give the devil his due," interposed Ashburn; "you know very well that the whole concern would have gone if it hadn't been for that young feller."

"What young feller? where?"

"Why, here," said Silas, pulling forward our young stranger; "this here chap."

"Young man," began Mr Keene,—but at the moment, up came somebody with a light, and while Clarissa had disappeared behind Mr Ashburn, the stranger was recognized by her aunt and uncle as Charles Darwin.

"Charles! what on earth brought you here?"

"Ask Clary," said Ashburn, with grim jocoseness.

Mr Keene turned mechanically to obey, but Clarissa had disappeared.

"Well! I guess I can tell you something about it, if

nobody else won't," said Ashburn. "I'm something of a Yankee, and it's my notion that there was some sparkin' a goin' on in your kitchen, and that somehow or other the young folks managed to set it a-fire."

The old folks looked more puzzled than ever. "*Do* speak, Charles," said Mr Keene; "what *does* it all mean? Did you set my house on fire?"

"I'm afraid I must have had some hand in it, sir," said Charles, whose self-possession seemed quite to have deserted him.

"You!" exclaimed Mr Keene, "and I've been laying it to this man!"

"Yes! you know'd I owed you a spite, on account o' that plaguy bee-tree," said Ashburn, "a guilty conscience needs no accuser. But you was much mistaken if you thought I was such a bloody-minded villain as to burn your gimcrackery for that! If I could have paid you for it, fair and even, I'd ha' done it with all my heart and soul. But I don't set men's houses a-fire when I get mad at 'em."

"But you threatened vengeance," said Mr Keene.

"So I did, but that was when I expected to get it by law, though and this here young man knows that, if he'd only speak."

Thus adjured, Charles did speak, and so much to the purpose that it did not take many minutes to convince Mr Keene that Ashburn's evil-mindedness was bounded by the limits of the law, that precious privilege of Wolverine. But there was still the mystery of Charles's apparition, and in order to its unravelment, the blushing Clarissa had to be enticed from her hiding-place, and brought to confession. And then it was made clear that she with all her innocent looks, was the moving cause of the mighty mischief. She it was who encouraged Charles to believe that her uncle's anger would not last for ever; and this had led Charles to venture into the neighbourhood; and it was while consulting together (on this particular point, of course) that they managed to set the kitchen curtain on fire, and then—the reader knows the rest.

These things occupied some time in explaining,—but they were at length, by the aid of words and more eloquent blushes, made so clear, that Mr Keene concluded, not only to new roof the kitchen, but to add a very pretty wing to one side of the house. And at the present time, the steps of Charles Darwin, when he returns from a surveying tour, seek the

little gate as naturally as if he had never lived anywhere else. And the sweet face of Clarissa is always there, ready to welcome him, though she still finds plenty of time to keep in order the complicated affairs of both uncle and aunt.

And how goes life with our friends the Ashburns? Mr Keene has done his very best to atone for his injurious estimate of Wolverine honour, by giving constant employment to Ashburn and his sons, and owning himself always the obliged party, without which concession all he could do would avail nothing. And Mrs Keene and Clarissa have been unwearied in their kind attentions to the family, supplying them with so many comforts that most of them have got rid of the ague, in spite of themselves. The house has assumed so cheerful an appearance that I could scarcely recognize it for the same squalid den it had often made my heart ache to look upon. As I was returning from my last visit there, I encountered Mr Ashburn, and remarked to him how very comfortable they seemed.

"Yes," he replied, "I've had pretty good luck lately; but I'm goin' to pull up stake, and move to Wisconsin. I think I can do better, further west."

XLI.

LETTING HER SLIDE, AND EFFECTS OF THE SAME.

SEVERAL years since, business called me south, and during my sojourn there I had occasion to pass through the (so called) "Turpentine District" of North Carolina. There were six of us passengers in a stage-coach that was moving along at the rate of about three knots an hour, one hot morning in September, within about an hour's ride of the place where we expected to take dinner, for which we were all pretty "sharp set," as our previous meal hadn't been "much to brag of" as to the quality.

I was suddenly aroused out of the usual stage-coach doze, by hearing a voice hailing the driver, and the stopping of the stage to take up two passengers. The elder, whose name I afterwards learned was Bradford, was a large, square-built man, with a good-natured, quiet sort of expression. The younger, a

man of twenty-five or thirty, was tall, slim, and rather delicate-looking, with a jolly, devil-may-care style, and a peculiar short, jerked-out sort of speech, which reminded one of the celebrated Alfred Jingle, Esq., of Pickwickian notoriety. This latter person (who was called by his friend Mac), was the one who had stopped the stage, and whose peculiar *façon de parler* caused us some merriment. The first was addressed to the driver as follows :—

“Hold up, driver—room for two—just in time—in with you! *Let her slide!*”—which latter clause (alluding to the graceful, gliding motion) he affixed to all his remarks, without regard of their bearing on the subject. Both of these individuals were, I thought, slightly elevated.

“I say, Brad, old fellow, hand her out—*let her slide!*”

Who the female alluded to was, I had little time to conjecture, for “Brad” thrust his hand into an inside pocket and drew out a “pocket pistol” of immense size, and clapping the muzzle to his own muzzle, he reduced the load considerably, and passed it to “Mac,” who followed suit, and presented the *weapon* to me, with an invitation to “take a pull—cool you down—hot day—capital stuff, very—*let her slide!*” I declined, however; when he returned the “pocket companion” to his friend, remarking,—

“Dinner at old ’ooman’s—lots o’ dogs—bacon and indigo—hominy and whiskey. *Let her slide!*”

At the mention of the fluid, the elder drew out the “pocket companion” again, and came to a “present arms,” with the muzzle applied to the fissure in his countenance, Mac (who, meanwhile, was becoming very communicative) remarking,—

“High old gal—six foot eight—two fifty—fourteen barrel! *Let her slide!*”

To which description, the stout man said, “Who?”

“Landlady—hotel—dye-house—niggers and homespun—been there before. *Let her slide!*”

Mac received the “pocket companion,” which he did justice to, and handed it round, with an assurance that it was “prime stuff—take a snifter—appetite for dinner—*let her slide!*”

In a few moments we drove up to the hotel; Mac, and the large pattern of a small nail (Brad), amusing themselves with the “pistol,” with scarcely enough remaining to *prime* with, though they were pretty well *loaded*.

As we drove up to the door, some score, at least, of miserable-looking, half-starved dogs came yelping out to meet us, snuffing and smelling about our heels as we alighted, as if it

would afford them considerable gratification to sample our underpinning. Mac here broke out (as he *histed* one of the crowd about a rod),—

“Large assortment—constantly on hand—dozen, or great gross—liberal to dealers—prime sas’ges! *Let her slide!*”

Our landlady was, as Mac described, a large, powerful woman, who kept a dye-house and half-way-house, and some half a dozen niggers. Several pieces of cloth were hanging on the fences about, I noticed, as I with the others passed into the dining-room. I hastily scanned the table to see if any “sas’ges” were there, for Mac’s hint seemed not an improbable idea. “That pie made o’ kittens,” may be a delicate and palatable dish, but “sas’ges” out of tough dogs we could not exactly stand!

But no such dish appeared; at the head of the table was a large deep dish, containing about a gallon of “*sop*” or liquid grease, on the top of which a few dried-up pieces of bacon were floating; next, a large dish of hominy; in the middle, a decidedly bluish-looking loaf of corn-bread was placed, which derived its azure tints from the blue dye used in the establishment, as the darky cook had evidently taken her hands from one of the dye-tubs (of which there were several in the room), to the meal bag, without washing; at the extreme end, was a pair of miserably mean-looking No. 3 mackerel, done to a crisp. We were completely disgusted with this display of a dinner for eight, and we retreated to the piazza, where Bradford and Mac were holding a hurried consultation, in a low tone. They returned to the room, and Brad, addressing the landlady, said—

“Old ’ooman! what’s the p-pr-price of dinner?”

“Fifty cents,” was the reply.

“That’s four d-dollars,” said Brad. “Now what’ll ’you t-ta-take for the entire s-s-spread, fixins and all?”

“Seven dollars,” was the reply.

Brad immediately handed out a very suspicious-looking ten-dollar on a Mississippi bank, and received an equally dubious one in return, when he and Mac suddenly grasped the four corners of the table-cloth, and hoisting it clear of the table, Mac sung out—

“Now, then, here she goes—stand from under—one, two, three! *Let her slide!*”

“Let her slide” they did too, dishes, cloth, blue bread, and all, out of the window! The smash was a signal for a regular stampede of dogs, who were seen swallowing the eatables, and

snarling and fighting among themselves, which was pretty music, together with the yar! yars! of the niggers, and our roars at Mac, as the enraged landlady fastened on him, and, before we could prevent it, soused his head several times into a dye-tub close by, filled with a blue liquid!

We all made tracks for the stage, Bradford handing the driver the remaining three-dollar, telling him to "start the waggon."

Mac had escaped from the grasp of the "old 'oman," and as we drove off, minus our dinners, Mac was wiping his face with his handkerchief, and exclaiming—

"*Dye is cast*"—dyed on the fifteenth instant—sudden and unexpected—blue—deeply and darkly—dyed in the wool—fast colours—warranted to wash—liquid hair dye—deed of darkest dye—'twere well done—'twere done quickly—high old gal—*let her slide!*"

Mac was now getting pathetic (of course owing to the liquid blue, though he had just drained the "pistol" of the other liquid).

"'Twere vain to tell thee—all I feel—friends, countrymen, and lovers—him have I offended—no, d—n it, *her*—what's banished—but set free—feller cit'zens—called t'gether—'portant 'casion—d' d' da—n the in ind indigo—*let her slide!*" and Mac fell over into the arms of Bradford, completely done up, with too much *liquid*. He fell into a troubled sleep, and occasionally he would murmur—"high old gal—d— the indigo—beautiful blue—deep blue sea—*Let her slide!*"

XLII.

THE FIRST PIANO IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS.

A FEW evenings since, after reading to a lady the story about the introduction of a pianoforte into the state of Arkansas—which is conceded on all hands to be a good 'un—a feminine friend related to me the incidents connected with the first appearance of the "inanimate quadruped" in the northern portion of the Sucker State—she being "an eye-witness" to what occurred on that occasion. For the amusement of my readers I will venture to describe them.

During the summer following the termination of the Black-Hawk war—being among the first of the “down east” emigrants to the country then barely evacuated by the “red men of the forest”—Dr A., of Baltimore, removed to what has since become a small town near the Illinois river, by the name of P——. The doctor’s family was composed of three young ladies and his wife, all four of whom were performers on the piano, and one of them the possessor of the instrument in question.

As is usually the case in all newly-settled places when a “new comer” makes his appearance, the “neighbours” (that were to be) had collected together for the purpose of seeing the doctor’s “plunder” unpacked, and making the acquaintance of its possessor.

Dr A.’s “household” was stowed away in seven large waggons—being first packed in pine boxes, on which were painted in large black letters the contents, address, &c.

One waggon after another was unloaded without much sensation on the part of the little crowd of lookers-on, except an occasional exclamation, similar to the following, from those who had “never seen the like before”:—

“‘Glass—This side up with care!’ Why, I thought this ere fellar was a doctor! What on yearth is he going to do with that box full of winders!”

“‘This side up with care!’” exclaimed one. “He’s got his paragoric and ile-of-spike fixins in that. Won’t he fizic them agur fellows down on the river?”

In the last waggon there was but *one* large box, and on it were painted the words—“*Piano Forte—Keep dry and handle carefully.*” It required the assistance of all the bystanders to unload this box, and the curiosity excited in the crowd upon reading the foregoing words, and hearing the musical sounds emitted as it touched the ground, can only be gathered by giving a few of the expressions that dropped from the spectators.

“Pine Fort!” said a tall, yellow-haired, fever-and-ague-looking youth—“Wonder if he’s afeerd of the Injuns? He can’t scare them with a pine fort!!”

“K-e-e-p D-r-y,” was spelled by a large raw-boned looking man, who was evidently a liberal patron of “old bald face,” who broke off at the letter “y” with “D—— your temperance caratturs; you needn’t come round here with tracts!”

He was interrupted at this point by a stout-built personage, who cried out—

"He's got his skelton in thar, and he's afeerd to giv them liker, for they'll break out if he does! Poor fellars! they must suffer powerfully!"

"Handle carefully!" said a man, with a red hunting-shirt, and the size of whose "fist," as he doubled it up, was twice that of an ordinary man. "There's some live crittur in thar. Don't you hear him groan?" This was said as the box struck the ground, and the concussion caused a vibration of the strings.

No sooner had all hands let go of the box, than Dr A. was besieged by his neighbours—all of whom were determined to know what were its contents, and what was the meaning of the words, "Piano Forte." On his telling them that it was a musical instrument, some "reckoned that it would take a tarnal sight of wind to blow it!" others, "that it would take a lot of men to make it go!" &c., &c. The Doctor explained its operations as well as he could, but still his description was anything but satisfactory; and he could only get rid of his inquisitive neighbours by promising a sight at an early day.

Three days—days that seemed like weeks to the persons before mentioned—elapsed before the premises of Dr A. were arranged for the reception of visitors; and various and curious were the surmises among the "settlers" during this time. Dr A. and his "plunder" were the only topics for conversation for miles around. The Doctor's house had but one lower room, but this was one of double the ordinary size, and the carpets were all too small to cover the entire floor; hence a strip of bare floor appeared at each side of the room. Opposite to and facing the door was placed the "Pine Fort." All was ready for the admission of "vizters," and Miss E. was to act as the first performer. The Doctor had but to open the door, and half a score of men were ready to enter. Miss E. took her seat, and at the first sounding of the instrument, the whole party present rushed in. Some went directly up to the "crittur," as it had been called on account of its having four legs—some more shy remained close to the door, where, if necessary, they could more easily make their escape—while others, who had never seen a carpet, were observed walking round on the strip of bare floor, lest by treading on the "handsome kaliker," they might "spile" it!

The first tune seemed to put the whole company in ecstasies. The raw-boned man, who was so much opposed to temperance tracts, pulled out a flask of whiskey, and insisted that the "gal," as he called Miss E., should drink. Another of the company

laid down a dime, and wanted, "that's worth" more out of the "*forty pains*," as the name had come to him after travelling through some five or six pronunciations. Another, with a broad grin on his face, declared that he would give his "claim" and all the "truck" on it, if his "darter" could have such a "cupboard!" The "pine fort" man suggested that if that sort of music had been in the Black Hawk war, "they would have sheered the Injuns like all holler!"

It is needless to say, that it was late at night before Miss E. and the other ladies of the house could satisfy their delighted hearers that they were all tired out. The whole country for twenty miles round rung with the praises of Dr A.'s "consarns" and their musical "cupboard." The Doctor immediately had any quantity of patients—all of whom, however, would come in person for "advice," or a few "agur pills," but none of whom would leave without hearing the "forty pains."

With an easy way and a good-natured disposition, Dr A. soon formed an extensive acquaintance, obtained a good practice, and became a popular man. He was elevated to some of the most popular offices in the gift of the people—one of which he held at the time of his death. So much for the *charms* of the Piano Forte!

XLIII.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

"A matter fitly adorned with Woods."

WA-AL, began the Yankee, seeing as most the whole of the good company have given a story a-piece, I guess it would be pretty curious for me to hold back, so I'll give you the story of the great Sleigh-hunt at Wiscasset, down East, in the district of Maine. It is now near about ten years that I was keeping school in Wiscasset. I did not take to it much, but not being able to pick up any chores, I thought I might as well do a little at school-keeping, seeing a twelve dollars a month and found was better than nothin'. So I began my work, sitting in a school-house ten hours a day, and boarding round from house to house, so as to take out the share of every one that had children to school;—five days for a boy, and three for a

girl. At first I went to Squire Marsh, then to Deacon Sweets, then to the Minister's; to all these places I fared pretty smartly, plenty to eat and that of the best; but, Lord bless ye, when I got to some of the others,—old Brooks, and widow Pettibone, and George Seabury—gosh! it was another thing. Brooks was a regular skin-flint; and tough bull beef, old rusty pork, potatoes none of the soundest, was the best fare I tasted during his weeks. Thanks to gracious, he hadn't but two children, a boy and a girl, to school; and I was glad enough to let him off with seven days instead of eight. Indeed, I never thought I should have stood it so long, but by good luck the squire asked me to dine with him on Sunday, and on Thursday afternoon we had a quilting at the Deacon's, so that gave me two good meals and helped me through; but all this is nothing to the sleigh-ride. It so happened that Deacon Bigelow and Squire Marsh, each on 'em got a new sleigh this winter from Boston; so Parson Emerson, not to be behindhand, set Zekiel Jones, the wheelwright, and Josh Whitney the painter, to work on his old sleigh, and, pity me! if it did not come out nigh about as good as new. This, in course, gave a great start to the folks in Wiscasset in the way of sleigh-riding, and we all agreed to have a right good time the first smart snow.

Peleg Bigelow, Deacon Bigelow's son, was to take his sister Sally, and Fanny Johnson; they did say that Peleg was making up to Fanny in the way of sparkin', but I guess 'twas only sort o' so and sort o' not so, for Peleg was a curious critter, and didn' do nothing in a hurry. Joe Marsh, the squire's son, was to take the new Boston sleigh; she was a real picture, held twelve seated, and could pack ten more, with his sister Sally, the Whitneys, and a whole lot more; the doctor drove the parson's sleigh, and took Prudence and Experience Emerson, and all the whole tribe of the Norths. Doctor Lawrence wanted Sally Marsh to go along, and I sort o' guess the squire and ma'am wouldn't have no objections; but Sally wouldn't look at him in the courting line, and no wonder, Doctor was forty if he was a day, and about as good-looking as "get out;" any how, Sally wouldn't have nothing to say to him. I 'greed with Joe Whitney for his mare, and widow Pettibone promised to let me have her sleigh providin' I would pay Zekiel Jones for a little fixin' up it wanted. The pesty old critter never once let me see the sleigh till I had 'greed with her and Zekiel Jones, but when he got it, sure enough it was all to pieces. Zekiel said he had most as lives make a new one, but the old woman had kept me hanging on so long, that everything that

looked like a sleigh was taken up ; so I had no chance, 'twas widow Pettibone's sleigh or no frolic. Now, though I was obligated to take Dolly and Jenny Pettibone (the old mother cornered me into that), yet Sally Marsh partly said that maybe she would give Joe the slip coming home, and take driver's seat with me. This made me the more earnest and willing to take the old woman's sleigh cost what it would.

Well ! seeing as every one was provided with sleighs, the next pint was, where should we go ? Some were for Pardon Bowers's tavern on the Portland road, ten miles out ; some for Gosnam's down, on the beach ; and some for Jem Davis's over to Colebrook. I rather guess we should finally have agreed on Pardon's, for he had a grand room for a dance, and his flip was about so I tell ye ; but when we had most made up our minds to try him, and only stood out because of the price, for Pardon wanted every feller to pay five-and-sixpence lawful, and three fourpence-ha'pennees for each gal, think o' that ! Well, Pardon, he swore and we argufied ; but just about that time came a man from young George Peabody, who had married Jane Marsh, Sally's sister, and gone to live on the squire's farm at Colebrook, to say that we must all come out there and bring our fiddlers, and he would have everything ready, and it should not cost one of us a cent. Lord ! I wish you could have seen Pardon Bowers's face when I tell'd him the news. We had had a long talk in the forenoon, Peter Bigelow and me, with Pardon, but he was as stiff as a shingle ; so just after dinner I got the news of George Peabody's offer, so Joe Marsh and me, we went right over to Pardon's to tell him about it. The feller saw us comin', and made sure that he had us now as tight as wax.

" Well, boys," said he, " have you come up to my price ? "

" Why, ye see, Pardon Bowers," said I, " we must talk it over once more ; five-and-sixpence each feller, and three fourpence-ha'pennees a gal is a thing we can't stand."

" Well ! well ! Nathaniel Dorr, there's no use of no more talking ; ' you are all talk and no cider.' I'm a thinkin' now jest come to the pint ; say yes or no to my price, and I have done ; I'm blamed if I care whether the sleigh-ride comes this way or not."

" Well, Pardon, if that's your idee, and you don't really care whether it comes your way or not——"

" Not I ! blame my skin, if I'd give ninepence for the job."

" Well, seeing as it is so, I guess we'll take up with George Peabody's offer. He has invited the whole of the party to stop at the new farm at Colebrook, and I guess we'll have a pretty

nice time ; we take out our fiddles, and George gets everything else."

Gracious me ! how Pardon did cuss and swear. " My eyes to darnation ! who ever heard o' the like ! Hang that 'ere Peabody, the mean sneakin——" Here Pardon stopped pretty short, for he remembered that Joe Marsh, who was standing by, was Peabody's brother-in-law, and he know'd that though Joe was a slow critter, yet once get his dander up he would be savage as a meat axe. So Pardon dar'd not say nothing, but went grumbling into the house. We gave him one hurra ! and were off about as tight as we could spring.

Now, all being ready, we only waited for the first snow, but somehow or other that held off. Christmas was close by, and tho' we had had three or four flurries, yet nothing like a regular north-easter and a fair fall of snow. We began to think there wasn't no more snow to come ; but finally on the last Sunday in the year, the clouds gathered thick and hung low, and just about forenoon meeting time, the large heavy flakes began to fall, and everything promised a heavy snow. All meeting time you could see the young fellers stretch their necks most out of their stiffners to peep at the clouds, and when meeting was out, no one pretended to know the text of the sermon, they were so busy talking about the snow and the sleigh-ride, all intermission 'twas exactly the same ; 'twas " When shall we go ? " and " Who shall drive first ? " among the fellers ; and " What shall we wear ? " and " How shall we look ? " among the gals. Well ! afternoon meeting came ; the ground was covered, the clouds looked heavy and full of snow, though still it did not exactly come down ; however, they all said 'twould come on at sunset. So Parson Emmerson gave out,

" His hoary frost, his fleecy snow,
Descend and clothe the ground."

Mr Flag set " Winter," and I guess the singers did roar it out about slick. Well, we all looked that Parson Emmerson would have given us his snow sermon ; the parson he'd preached a very great sermon about snow storms, from Job xxxviii. 27, the first winter he came to Wiscasset, and seeing as all the people were so well pleased with it, he gave it to them once every winter from that day to this ; but I don't know how it was, he did not. Maybe he thought 'twould have made us think too much about the sleigh-ride ; anyhow he took another text, and gave a sermon on regeneration or adoption or something of that sort. Well, after meeting, we all hurried out to see how the

clouds looked. The first one out was Sam Wheaton. Sam sot near the door, he gave one spring and was out beyond the porch ; he looked up at the clouds, and then he ripped right out, "ded rot my skin, if it aint clearing up !" And so it was ; the clouds were scaling off, the snow had stopped, no signs of sleigh-riding.

When the folks all got fairly out, such a talking and wondering and a guessing you never did hear, 'twas not likely but we should have some snow before May-day ; so we all went home determined to wait in patience. Three weeks went by, and now 'twas the middle of January, when one afternoon it began to snow in right earnest—small, dry, fine, and straight down. Before school was out, the ground was covered half-a-foot deep. I hurried to the squire's to speak to Joe about it, when, did ye ever ! before I could get to the door, I heard the bell toll ; somebody was dead. I guess I did not lose much time before I got to the meeting-house, I found old Joe Wimple tolling away.

"Why, Mr Nathaniel Dorr, is that you out in the midst of the snow ? What is the matter, anybody dead ?"

"Why, Joe Wimple," said I, as soon as I could get my breath, "if nobody isn't dead, why the nation are you tolling the bell ?"

"Oh ! surely Mrs Pettibone is dead ; I thought you must know that."

"Mrs Pettibone ? why, I saw her well enough this morning !"

"Oh, ho ! Mr Nat, I don't mean Nancy Pettibone ; but the old grandmother that's been bed-rid these ten years ; she has got her release at last."

Here was a pretty how-d'ye-do ; this darnation old woman had been bed-rid these ten years, and now she must die just so as to break up our fine sleigh-ride. I went back to the squire's, all the way contriving how soon we could get over it ; maybe the funeral would be to-morrow ; and then in two or three days we might start ; anyhow I should be clear of fat Dolly Pettibone, and now I can have a right smart chance for Sally Marsh out and home. I got to the squire's, Joe was in the sitting-room with Sally and ma'am ; just as we began to talk it over, the squire came in ; he would not hear a word of the sleigh-ride for at least a fortnight. "Benjamin Pettibone had been an old and respectable inhabitant of the town ; a select man, and once member of general court ; and it would never do to slight his widow's death in this way ; "particularly," said the squire, "as she is poor, and the family rather reduced."

Here, then, was a put off for a fortnight, and we had nothing

to do but to have patience a while longer. Well, we did wait, and a tedious time we had of it, never was finer sleighing seen ; cold bright days, fine, clear, moonshiny nights, made on purpose for sleighing ; then, as bad luck would have it, old Ma'am Pettibone had died just at the full of the moon ; so if we waited a fortnight, we might be sure of dark nights and no moon. This was vexatious, but the squire stood out we must not think of it a day sooner than the end of the second week. Well, ye all know a fortnight can't last for ever, and this here one, though 'twas a plaguy long one, came to an end at last on Friday. Joe Marsh, and Peleg Bigelow, and the doctor and me, had a meeting to the school-house to fix the thing finally. Wa-al, Peleg was for Monday, saying there was no use at all of putting it off, as the snow would then have been on the ground nigh twenty days, but Joe, who, as I said before, was a slow sort of critter, he guess'd he could not get ready by Monday, and he named Wednesday. Now, it so happened that Thursday was the day for the s'lect men to visit school, so I could not anyhow at all be away Wednesday afternoon, nor Thursday. Well, Friday was finally fixed, and Joe was to let his brother, George Peabody, know that Friday evening we would be out, gals, fiddles, and all. I guess you'll think we was pretty glad to get the thing finally settled, so I went that very night to the squire's, to talk with squire about the examination, and maybe to slip in a word to Sally about our going out and home together. Well, squire was not at home, but I found ma'am and Sally in the sitting-room ; Sally sewing something smart for the sleighing, and ma'am knitting. I guess Sally blushed like 'nation when she saw me begin to draw up to her. Well, we had a pretty nice time ; ma'am got out some apples and cider, we chatted away fine ; I praised the cider and the apples, and the old lady's knitting. Finally, ma'am got into right good humour. " Well, Mr Nathaniel," she begun, " I suppose you never heard me tell of the curious way of my first seeing Squire Marsh ? " In course, I said no, and should be glad to know.

Now, I know'd the story most by heart, for the fact is, ma'am Marsh never let any one stay long in Wiscasset without telling 'em this story. Well, I suppose it had been a long while since she got a chance to tell it, for when I said " I'd never heard it " (for truly I never had heard her tell it), she was well nigh tickled to death ; so she began to rights, and told the whole thing, how she went to see her uncle at Baintree, in the Bay State, and whereabouts in the town he lived, and how many children he had ; then came her visit, how often she had

been asked, and how first one thing and then another had hindered her, till finally she got a chance and went. Then came her going to church, and what she wore,—an elegant brocade, with white scarlet and yellow figures,—then she described the train, and the bonnet. Lord! lord! I thought she never would have done, never in creation. However, finally she got to church, met the squire, loved and married him. But, now all this while I had to listen pretty sharp, for Sally had telled me that ma'am never forgave any one for not listening to her story; so I heard with all my ears, and took care to laugh, and then to say "laws o' me!" and "you don't say so?" and "did I ever?" just in the right place. Ma'am was then carried away with the thought of having such a good listener, and she made the story twice as long and ten times as tedious, so Sally said, as she ever had in her life before. Finally, she came to an end; and then, just as she was all in a pucker with the recollection of her younger days, I ventured to ask "if Sally might not take fat Dolly Pettibone's place in the widow's sleigh?" The old lady peeked up her mouth a little. "She did not use to let Sally go out except with Joe, but seeing as it's you, I don't know but I will, providin' that Sally's agreeable." Sally, like a good girl, was quite willing to go mother's road when she saw which road it was. I would ha' liked right well to have had nobody else along, but ma'am looked so 'nation sour when I spoke of it, that 'twas finally 'greed that Sally should take her little cousin Jenny Fairchild, to fill up the odd place. Seeing as I had gone on so smart, I guessed I'd better be going, afore the squire came in to change our plans, so I made ma'am my best bow, gave Sally a roguish look (I think she sort o' smiled back), and I was off.

Well, nothin' happened till Wednesday afternoon, when Joe Marsh came over to the school-house just as school was out in the afternoon, and tell'd me he had got to go over to Colebrook, to carry a whole lot of things to George. "Now, Nat," says Joe, "I want you to go along. Will ye go?"

"Why, Joe, it's no use saying I should be right glad to go over with you; but the fact is, to-morrow is examination day, and I can't no way in the world spare the time. I must see to the school-house, fix the benches, get the chairs for the Select men and Parson Emmerson; so I guess I can't go."

"Oh, yes, you must go, Nat," says Joe; "it won't take more than two hours, and mind my word, Nat, you will be sorry if you don't."

Now, as Joe said this, he kind a snickered a little, and gave

a curious sort of look out of his eyes, as much as to say, "I knew, if I chose to tell." I tried to get it out of him, but he was "*mum*;" I didn't know what to do, but finally I 'greed to go, and Joe hurried off to get ready. Well, when I came to think it over, says I to myself, "Sure as a gun, Sally is somehow or other at the bottom of it;" so I took time to fix and get out and brush my best coat—blue, with gilt buttons, cost thirteen dollars in Portland, think of that! I got it out, however, and finally rigged, and was off for the squire's. Joe had a whole lot of things to carry; indeed, the sleigh was well nigh loaded down with boxes, and baskets, and demijohns, and jugs, and bottles. I thought for certain that ma'am Marsh had emptied her store-room into it. However, all the things were soon stowed away, and Joe and I were just ready to jump into the sleigh, when, lo and behold! out came Sally, all rigged ready for a ride. She kind o' coloured up when she saw me: "La! Mr Dorr, I did not know you was going with Joe. Why did you not tell me, Joe?"

"Oh!" says Joe, "room enough, Sally, jump in, jump in."

Ma'am Marsh had gone in, but just at the wrong time out she came with a big jug. "Here, here, Joe, you forgot Jenny's yeast jug; she sent——" The old lady stopped in the midst of her speech when she saw Sally in the sleigh. "Why, Sally, you aint going, surely?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," said Sally, talking it very fast; "it's so long since I have seen Jenny, and I know she will want me to see about the things, and so I thought——"

Here the horses gave a start, I rather guess Joe pricked one of them; he pulled, Sally screamed, I caught the yeast bottle out of the old lady's hands, and whispered "Be off" to Joe. The old lady cried "Stop! stop!" Joe did everything to stop the horses except pull the reins, and we were off before you could say Jack Robinson.

I heard ma'am screaming after us, "Take care of your sister, Joe." On we went, as fast as we could clip it, Sally sitting in one corner, and I edging up to her every jolt the sleigh gave till I was close alongside. Joe had as much as he could do to manage the horses, he had out the young ones; so Sally and I were all the same as quite alone. In less than no time we got to the bridge at Colebrook, Joe checked his horses to a walk over, according to the rules of the bridge. Well, we had got most over, when pop! right under my feet, I thought 'twas a pistol. Sally screamed, Joe swore right out, "Blame the yeast jug, it has burst." The crack of the bottle, Sally's scream, and

Joe's cursing, just drove the horses right mad; away they flew; one spring, we were past the toll-house; another, they rounded the corner towards the pond, over went the sleigh, and afore I knew anything, souse we were all of us in the pond. By good luck it was not deep, or we might never have got out, for the whole sleigh load went together. Sally and Joe, and me and the boxes, and jars and bottle, and demijohn, helter-skelter. Jim Davis, who saw the whole, then ran down, and by his help we scrambled out, dragged out the sleigh, though the pole was broken and one of the sides, and saved some of the things. Then we put Sally, who was most frozen to death, poor soul! into Jim's sled, that luckily stood by, mounted ourselves, and soon got to George's.

Jenny Peabody took charge of Sally, and George had Joe and me into his bed-room, where he offered each of us a suit of dry clothes. Joe did pretty well, for though he was so thin that George's things hung all in bags round him, yet being of the same height it did not look so bad; as for me, I tried it every way and how, but it would not do. George was a little short critter, and his trowsers did not come down to my knee; and even then the top of the trowsers and the bottom of the jacket were wide apart. So, after hugging and coaxing, 'twas no use. "Come! come! Nat!" said George; "my rigging never will go on to your spars, so just turn into bed and we will dry your own things." There was no use objecting, so I, like my lord mayor, went to bed while my breeches were—not mending, to be sure, but—drying. Towards night George came up with my things, I dressed and came down to the sitting-room; Sally was not down, and her sister said 'twas not to be thought of her returning to Wiscasset that night. George was very friendly in asking me to stay, but I told him next day was examination, and I had been away too long already. Here, however, was another put-off to our sleigh-ride; George Peabody had lost half his things, and Sally was sick,—no hope of sleighing for Friday. I began to think the very deuce was in it, and that we never should have our frolic; however, George, who was a real free-hearted fellow, said we must come next week, by that time Sally would be well, and Jenny all ready. I hung back a little at first, but finally we agreed for next Friday providing that Sally was well. This being fixed, Joe and I started, and soon got back to Squire Marsh; ma'am was frightened almost out of her wits at our being out so late and Sally's not coming with us. We soon told the whole story, and then I went off home. the squire sent Dan, his hired man, after

Doctor Lawrence, as he did not think much of Jarvis, the Colebrook doctor. Next day, bright and early, I went over to the squire's to hear the news. Early as it was, the doctor had been over, and I found him with the squire telling the symptoms. He talked very learned about the nerves and the vital energies, and a deal more that was too deep for me, and for the squire too, I fancy; however, it all went for gospel with the squire, who had a great idea of Doctor Lawrence. I was obliged to hasten to school, and attend examination; this took up all day, and in the evening I was too tired to go anywhere, so heard nothing of Sally.

Next day I had a talk with Joe about her. He said that the doctor still talked very wise about her, that he would not let her leave her bed, though she told him she was quite well. Thursday came, and still Sally was in bed; the sleigh-ride was put off once more, and no day fixed, for the doctor would not, or could not, tell when Sally would be well enough to go. Now, all this seemed pretty curious to me; I could not think what the old critter meant by keeping Sally up and hindering the frolic. Well, Saturday afternoon I was into Peleg Bigelow's store, with a whole lot o' fellers, talking and laughing, and now and then taking a glass of something good, when finally they all got talking about the sleigh-ride, and how often it had been put off; then Hezekiah Bigelow, Peleg's brother, spoke up; he was just down from Portland. "Now," says he, "fellers! can any o' ye tell when Sally Marsh will be well, so that ye can have this grand sleigh-ride you talk so much about?"

In course we all said, "No! Dr Lawrence says her nerves are all out of joint, and it's uncertain as life when she will be out again."

"Dr Lawrence and her nerves go to darnation," said Zekiah, "I know a thing or two; Sally Marsh will be quite well,—nerves, joints, and all,—as soon as the doctor gets word from Portland that the new sleigh he has ordered from Lawrence and Gammage is done. Now Bill Gammage told me yesterday that the sleigh would not be ready for a week at soonest, so you need not look to see Sally's nerves in joint for a good spell yet."

The news struck us all in a heap. Who would have thought that the plaguy old pill-driver would keep Sally in her room, drinking elder-flower tea and eating milk porridge till Lawrence and Gammage had got his sleigh done?

"But what is to be done?" said Peleg Bigelow; "it will never do to say that an old feller like Lawrence kept the whole

town out of a frolic only just because he hadn't got a new sleigh."

"Let's send him word the sleigh is ready," said Hezekiah; "Nat Dorr can write a note from Gammage, and I'll give it to the doctor, saying that the sleigh will be down to-morrow or next day, and you'll see if Sally's nerves aint well to-rights."

I went at it, and soon finished a note to Doctor Lawrence, promising him, in the name of Lawrence and Gammage, that the sleigh would be to home on Tuesday. Zekiah took it up, and we all staid in the store waiting to see what would come of it. Zekiah was not gone long, and when he came back he was well nigh dead with laughing. "Well, Zeek, what's the news; have you caught him?"

"Caught him?" says Zeek, "yes, that I have; caught him on the first bounce. No sooner had he read the note, than he hollowed right out for Sam to saddle the old gray, as he must go over to Colebrook, and mind my words, he will let Sally get well now."

"Like enough," said I; "so any way I will go to the squire's to-night, though 'tis Saturday night, and hear the news."

When I got there, I found, sure enough, the doctor had been out to Colebrook, and just back, and giving his opinion. 'Twas now quite another thing; no nerves nor vital energies, nor nothing of the sort, all plain and straightforward; Sally was better, was almost well, would be quite smart by the middle of the week. "And so," says the doctor, "George has made Thursday for the sleigh-ride, and hopes we will all come out. Sally says she will come home Monday."

Well, seeing this, I could not help giving the old feller a hint. "Pray, doctor," says I, "don't you think we might have the sleigh-ride on Tuesday, I guess all will be ready by that time?" The doctor looked plaguy hard at me, but I kept a stiff upper lip, and I never let on by word or look that meant any harm; he was sort o' puzzled, not knowing how to take me; finally, the squire helped him out.

"Oh, no, Mr Dorr, Thursday is soon enough."

"Oh! very well, squire, I only just asked, thinking maybe all might be ready by Tuesday." Here I gave another sharp squint at the doctor; he looked blank, but said nothing. Ma'am began to talk about it's being Saturday night, and holy time; so I took my hat and marched off, leaving the doctor to get out of his puzzle as well as he could.

Well, this time we made sure of our frolic. The weather was fine, Sally came home Monday, looking as fresh as a rose. Everybody was in high spirits, excepting the doctor; but when

Tuesday night came, and no sleigh from cousin 'Siah (Lawrence and Gammage was his cousin), the old feller looked pretty streaked. Wednesday morning I was going to school, when Zekiah Bigelow came up. "How d'ye do, Nat?" says he.

"Pretty smart; how's yourself?"

"Why, middling, thank ye. I was going to Portland to-day, though Peleg tried to persuade me to stay; but I have just been over to Parson Emmerson's, and, sure enough, they are all in a pucker. The doctor has sent word that he can't drive their sleigh, and they were most 'fraid to trust Sam, besides not liking so many gals to go with no beau but their father's hired man; so I reckoned I might as well offer, and sure enough they snapped me up about the quickest, I tell ye. Now, if the doctor don't get his new sleigh," says Zeek, and he gave a sort of snicker, "he will be in a pretty pickle. But here he is, sure enough, with a letter; I'll bet a dollar 'tis to Lawrence and Gammage about the new sleigh—however, it's too late now. Good morning, doctor; how is it you don't drive the parson's sleigh?"

"Why, Mr Zekiah, I am a good deal occupied just at present with professional business, and it is rather uncertain whether I can go or not; so I did not risk disappointing them."

"Well, doctor, so much the better for lazy folks like me; I am going to drive the Harrisons and the Emmersons myself."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "I thought you were going to Portland?"

"Oh, I was, but I guess I may as well stay to the frolic."

With that the doctor turned off towards the post-office; I went into the school-house, and Zekiah homewards.

I think I never did know a day quite so long as this Wednesday, seemed to me as if it would never be done; however, night came pretty soon after sun-down, and then I put on my blue, Jekiel Parsons, the tailor, had fixed it up, so that 'twas little or none the worse for the ducking in Colebrook pond, and went to the squire's to tea. Sally was to home, looking as bright as a button; and when I asked her not to forget her promise to take a seat in my sleigh, and she smiled so killing, Lord bless ye! I felt so all-overish.

The squire gave a queer look, and said, "Don't promise too soon; wait, Sally, always wait, and see how many offers you are going to get."

Ah, ah! thinks I, you are there, are you? The squire's pretty fierce in favour of the doctor, but we've got round him this time any how. "Think of the old boy," is an old saying,

and now it proved true, for just at the very minute in came the doctor. The squire went right up to him, good as could be; but the doctor looked black as a thunder-cloud. I had telled Joe Zekiah's prank, and now we thought to poke some fun at the old critter. "How is it, doctor," says Joe, "you don't join the sleigh-ride to-morrow night, I thought you were too great a beau to refuse?" The doctor said nothing, only mumbled out something about professional avocation, but Joe kept at him, telling how many were going, and what a fine time we should have, and all the while winding up with "Wonder you don't go, doctor; Sally expected it, didn't ye, Sally?" The squire saw that something was wrong, so he called off Joe, and sent him into the office to copy a law paper, and then challenged the doctor to play back-gammon; Sally at the same time took a demure turn and began to knit; so, seeing that nothing more in the way of fun was to be made out of them, I bade good night and went off home.

I believe I laid awake half the night, thinking of the sleigh-ride and Sally Marsh; finally, I got to sleep, and never waked till broad day. I looked to the window; darnation! what is this? I sprang up, looked out, 'twas a hard rain, wind south-ard and eastard, and the snow most all gone. All up with our frolic; and—would you b'lieve it!—that was the last snow that year, and we never had our sleigh-ride from that day to this!

XLIV.

A SHORT RECEIPT FOR A POTATO PUDDING.

THE author of the "Widow Bedott" papers furnishes an article for Saturday's "Gazette," from which we extract the following mirth-provoking recipe for a potato pudding. Mrs Mudlaw, we premise, is the cook of Mrs Philpot, wife of the candidate for congress, and Mrs Darling is the wife of a worthy mechanic, whose vote Colonel Philpot is ambitious to obtain. Mrs Darling calls upon Mrs Philpot, and the latter introduces her to Mrs Mudlaw, her cook, when the following conversation takes place.

"Miss Philpot says you want to get my receipt for potato pudden."

"Yes," replied Mrs Darling, "I would be obliged to you for the directions," and she took out of her pocket a pencil and paper to write it down.

"Well, 'tis an excellent pudden," said Mudlaw, complacently; "for my part, I like it about as well as any pudden I make, and that's saying a good deal I can tell you, for I understand making a great variety. 'Taint so awful rich as some, to be sure. Now there's the Cardinelle pudden, and the Washington pudden, and the Lay Fayette pudden, and the—"

"Yes, Mr Darling liked it very much—how do you make it?"

"Wal, I peel my potatoes and bile 'em in fair water. I always let the water bile before I put 'em in. Some folks let their potatoes lie and sog in the water ever so long before it biles; but I think it spiles 'em. I always make it a pint to have the water bile—"

"How many potatoes?"

"Wal, I always take about as many potatoes as I think I shall want. I'm generally governed by the size of the pudden I want to make. If it's a large pudden, why I take quite a number, but if it's a small one, why then I don't take as many. As quick as they're done, I take 'em up and mash 'em as fine as I can get 'em. I'm always very particular about *that*—some folks aint, they'll let their potatoes be full o' lumps. I never do. If there's anything I hate, it's lumps in potatoes. I *won't* have 'em. Whether I'm mashin potatoes for puddens or vegetable use, I mash it till there aint the size of a lump in it. If I can't get it fine without sifting, why, I *sift* it. Once in a while, when I'm otherways engaged, I set the girl to mashin on't. Wal, she'll give it three or four jams, and come along—'Miss Mudlaw, is the potatoer fine enough?' Jupiter Rammin! that's the time I come as near getting mad as I ever allow myself to come, for I make it a pint never to have lumps—"

"Yes, I know it is very important. What next?"

"Wal, then I put in my butter; in winter time I melt it a little, not enough to make it ily, but jest so's to soften it."

"How much butter does it require?"

"Wal, I always take butter accordin to the size of the pudden; a large pudden needs a good-size lump o' butter, but not too much. And I'm always particular to have my butter fresh and sweet. Some folks think it's no matter what sort of butter they use for cookin, but *I* don't. Of all things I do despise strong, frowy, rancid butter. For pity's sake have your butter fresh."

"How much butter did you say?"

"Wal, that depends, as I said before, on what size puddin you want to make. And another thing that regulates the quantity of butter I use, is the 'mount o' cream I take. I always put in more or less cream; when I have abundance o' cream I put in considerable, and when it's scarce, why I use more butter than I otherwise should. But you must be particular not to get in too much cream. There's a great deal in havin jest the right quantity; and so 'tis with all the ingrejiences. There aint a better pudden in the world than a potater pudden when it's made *right*, but taint everybody that makes 'em right. I remember when I lived in Tuckertown, I was a visitin to squire Humphrey's one time. I went in the first company in Tuckertown—dear me! this is a changeable world. Wal, they had what they call a potater pudden for dinner. Good lard! Of all the puddens! I've often occurred to that pudden since, and wondered what the squire's wife was a thinkin of when she made it. I warn't obleged to do such things in them days, and didn't know how to do anything as well as I do now. Necessity's the mother of invention. Experience is the best teacher after all—"

"Do you sweeten it?"

"O yes, to be sure, it needs sugar, best o' sugar, too; not this wet, soggy, brown sugar. Some folks never think o' usin good sugar to cook with, but, for my part, I won't have no other—"

"How much sugar do you take?"

"Wal, that depends altogether on whether you calculate to have saas for it—some like saas, you know, and then some agin don't. So, when I calculate for saas, I don't take so much sugar; and when I don't calculate for saas, I make it sweet enough to eat without saas. Poor Mr Mudlaw was a great hand for pudden saas. I always made it for him—good, rich saas, too. I could afford to have things rich before he was unfortunate in business." (Mudlaw went to State's prison for horse stealing.) "I like saas myself, too, and the curnel and the children are all great saas hands; and so I generally callate for saas, though Miss Philpot prefers the pudden without saas, and perhaps *you'd* prefer it without. If so, you must put in sugar accordinly. I always make it a pint to have 'em sweet enough when they're to be eat without saas."

"And don't you use eggs?"

"Certainly, eggs is one o' the principal ingrejiences."

"How many does it require?"

“Wal, when eggs is plenty, I always use plenty; and when they’re scarce, why I can do with less, though I’d ruther have enough; and be sure to beat them well. It does distress me the way some folks beat eggs. I always want to have ’em thoroughly beat for everything I use ’em in. It tries my patience most awfully to have anybody round me that won’t beat eggs enough. A spell ago we had a darkey to help in the kitchen. One day I was makin sponge cake, and, havin occasion to go up-stairs after something, I sot her to beaten the eggs. Wal, what do you think the critter done? Why, she whisked ’em round a few times, and turned ’em right into the other ingrejences that I’d got weighed out. When I come back and saw what she’d done, my gracious! I came as nigh to losin my temper as I ever allow myself to come. ’Twas awful provokin! I always want the kitchen help to do things as I want to have ’em done. But I never saw a darkey yet that ever done anythin right. They’re a lazy slaughtering set. To think o’ her spilin that cake so, when I’d told her over and over agin that I always made it a pint to have my eggs thoroughly beat!”

“Yes, it was too bad. Do you use fruit in the pudding?”

“Wal, that’s just as you please. You’d better be governed by your own judgment as to that. Some like currents and some like raisins, and then again some don’t like nary one. If you use raisins, for pity’s sake pick out the stuns. It’s awful to have a body’s teeth come grindin on to a raisin stun. I’d ruther have my ears boxed at any time.”

“How many raisins must I take?”

“Wal, not too many—it’s apt to make the pudden heavy, you know; and when it’s heavy it aint so light and good. I’m a great hand—”

“Yes. What do you use for flavouring?”

“There agin you’ll have to exercise your own judgment. Some like one thing, and some another, you know. If you go the hull figger on temperance, why some other kind o’ flavourin ’ll do as well as wine or brandy, I ’spose. But, whatever you make up your mind to use, be particular to get in a sufficiency, or else your pudden ’ll be flat. I always make it a pint—”

“How long must it bake?”

“There’s the great thing, after all. The bakin’s the main pint. A potater pudden, of all puddens, has got to be baked jest right. For if it bakes a leetle too much, it’s apt to dry it up—and then agin if it don’t bake quite enough, it’s sure to taste potatery, and that spiles it, you know.”

“How long should you think?”

"Wal, that depends a good deal on the heat of your oven. If you have a very hot oven, 'twon't do to leave it in too long, and if your oven aint so very hot, why you'll be necessiated to leave it in longer."

"Well, how can I tell anything about it?"

"Why, I always let 'em bake till I think they're done, that's the safest way. I make it a pint to have 'em baked exactly right. It's very important in all kinds o' bakin—cake, pies, bread, puddens, and everything—to have 'em baked precisely long enough, and jest right. Some folks don't seem to have no system at all about their bakin. One time they'll burn their bread to a crisp, and then again it'll be so slack taint fit to eat. Nothin hurts my feelins so much as to see things overdone or slack-baked. Here only t'other day, Lorry, the girl that Miss Philpot dismissed yesterday, came within an ace o' lettin my bread burn up. My back was turned a minit, and what should she do but go to stuffin wood into the stove at the awfulest rate. If I hadn't found it out jest when I did, my bread would a been sp'ilt as sure as I'm a live woman. Jupiter Rammin! I was about as much decomposed as I ever allow myself to get! I told Miss Philpot I wouldn't stand it no longer—either Lorry or me must walk."

"So, you've no rule about making this pudding?"

"No rule!" said Mudlaw, with a look of intense surprise.

"Yes," said Mrs Darling, "you seem to have no rule for anything about it."

"No rule!" screamed the indignant cook, starting up, while her red face grew ten times redder and her little black eyes snapped with rage. "No rules!" and she planted herself in front of Mrs Darling, erecting her fleshy figure to its full height of majestic dumpiness, and extending the forefinger of her right hand till it reached an alarming propinquity to the lady's nose. "No rules! do you tell me I've no rules! Me! that's cooked in the first families for fifteen years, and always gin satisfaction, to be told by such as you that I haint no rules!"

Thus far had Mudlaw proceeded, and I know not what length she would have "allowed herself" to go, had not the sudden entrance of Col. Philpot interrupted her. He being a person of whom she stood somewhat in awe, particularly just at this time, she broke off in the midst of her tirade, and, casting a look of ineffable disgust at Mrs Darling, retreated to her own dominions to vent her fury upon poor Peggy, who had done everything wrong during her absence.

XLV.

THE BERKSHIRE PIG; AN ELECTIONEERING RUSE.

"THE fact is, gentlemen," said one of a party, who were enjoying themselves in a private room over a glass of wine, and talking politics, "there are mighty few who know how the State of Louisiana was carried by the whigs during the last presidential campaign."

"How was it?" asked the party.

"Well, I'll tell you," said the speaker, who had a sly twinkling of humour in his eye. "During the campaign of '48, when the prominent advocates of democracy and whiggery were canvassing the State, one of the distinguished men of each party met by appointment at a small village, where the people were nearly equally divided in politics. The democrat spoke after the whig, and it was the general opinion that the democrat had carried the day.

"After he had concluded his speech the people were about to disperse, when a tall, raw-boned, ugly-looking customer got up on the stand and said—

"Gentlemen, afore you disperse I want to say a word or two in reply to that last gentleman that talked."

"At first the crowd commenced hissing and hooting, to put him down, but he wasn't one of the kind to stay put.

"Fellow-citizens,' shouted the stranger, in a stentorian voice, 'I will introduce myself to you as a Kentuckian. (Shouts of Hurrah for Kentucky.) They say Rome was once saved by the cacklin' of geese, but I don't think the hissin' of any of you here will save Lousiany, or elect old Zack!'

"This speech was received with rounds of applause and shouts of laughter. He had won the crowd over on his side. They perceived at once that he was a character, and they became very anxious to hear him.

"Fellow-citizens, continued the Kentuckian, 'I want a chance, if you will give it to me, to put the gentleman, that last talked to you about Gen. Cass, through a course of sprouts.' (Laughter, and cries of Go on.)

"Here the stranger put both hands in his coat pockets and drew out of one the Cleveland Plaindealer, and out of the

other the Nashville Union, and, with a sort of serio-comico expression of countenance, said—

“‘Fellow-citizens, you mustn’t be down on me because my talk is like sawed plank in the rough. It is too late now for me to commence plainin’ my language, though I once had a pretty smart sprinklin’ of larnin’, but I have always thought when I was young I collapsed a flue, and a right smart chance of it leaked out.’

“He then read from the Plaindealer the most strenuous assurances to the democracy of the North that Gen. Cass was a Wilmot proviso man, and from the Union assurances just as positive that Gen. Cass was a pro-slavery man.

“‘Now, I am not good at speaking,’ continued the Kentuckian, ‘but the Michigan man’s position puts me in mind of a little circumstance which happened in my neighbourhood in Kentucky some time ago, which I must tell you. You all remember what a perfect mania prevailed some years ago on the subject of Durham calves, Berkshire pigs, South Down sheep, &c. Well, I had a neighbour by the name of Martin, who was an uncommon clever physician, and an importer of fine stock. One day the doctor stopped to get his horse shod at neighbour Bird’s, the blacksmith who lived about two miles from the doctor’s house. The doctor commenced talking about his beautiful Berkshire pigs, and told the Blacksmith, in a fit of liberality, that he would give him a pig out of the next litter that “Su” had.

“‘In the course of two months or such a matter, the doctor called at the shop and told neighbour Bird that “Su” had had a fine litter, and to send and get his pig. So Bird posts his man Bob off with his wife’s large willow basket to get the pig. Between Bird’s and Martin’s Sam Smith, who was a great quiz, kept a little grocery, and seeing Bob coming post haste on his master’s horse old Tom, with the basket on his arm, he sang out, “Halloo, Bob, where are you going in such a hurry this morning?” “I is gwine to Massa Doctor Martin’s to get Massa Tom’s Buckshur pig, what Massa Doctor promise Massa Tom de las’ time he shod he hos,” said the negro, as he reined in his animal. “Well, Bob, you must stop as you come back and let me see the pig.” “Dat I will, Massa Sam; dat I will;” and away he went, at the top of old Tom’s speed. In less than an hour Bob returned with a genuine swine, and alighting at the grocery he lifted the cover of the basket, and to the astonished gaze of the grocery man, who imagined a Berkshire pig to be something more than a

mere hog, exhibited a very beautiful specimen of a jet black pig. An idea struck Sam Smith to play a joke on Bob, and knowing his propensity to imbibe, told him to go into the grocery and get a dram. While Bob was gone Sam Smith ran round the back of the house and got a little black pup nigh about the same heft, and took the pig out of the basket and put the pup in. When Bob came out and mounted his nag, Sam Smith handed him the basket, and off he went. On arriving at home the blacksmith asked him if he had got the pig. "Yes, massa, and a werry fine pig he be too," said Bob, lifting up the cover; "black as a coal;" when, to the utter astonishment of Bob and Bird, there lay a little black curly puppy. "Is that a Berkshire pig?" asked the blacksmith, in amazement; "why it is a pup, not a pig!" "Bless de Lord," said Bob, "he be pig when I put him in de basket, but he change to pup!" "Take him back, sir," said Bird, highly indignant, "and tell Dr Martin that I don't want to be fooled with his puppies, and if he don't want to give me a Berkshire pig, to say so."

"Bob started back, and naturally enough stopped at the grocery to relate his mishap to Sam Smith, who heard him out with a countenance expressive of wonder, at the same time doing his best to control his increasing desire to burst into fits. "Well, get down, Bob," said the grocer, "and take another dram." Bob didn't require a second invite, and while he was getting his "bald face," the grocer took the pup from the basket, and put back the pig. "Massa Sam," said Bob, coming out to mount his horse, "I am mighty obfusticated 'bout dis pig. Fust I tink him pig, I know he is pig fust, but den I know he is pup too. Arn't you sartain, Massa Sam, he was pig fust?" asked Bob, as he mounted his crittur. "I'll swear to it," replied Smith, and away Bob rode for the doctor's.

"On arriving at the house, Bob delivered his message, but the doctor seeming somewhat incredulous as to the truth of the story, Bob, with a flourish of insulted veracity, opened the lid of the basket, when, lo! there was the identical pig that he had started with. Bob stood transfixed, and with eyes protruding, and mouth open, remarked, "'for God, 'taint no use, Massa, he be pup or pig, jus' as he pleases.'" The crowd became convulsed with laughter, and gave the Kentuckian three cheers. The fellow was hired to tell the same story in the democratic parishes, which he did with such powerful effect that the whigs carried the State."

XLVI.

BINGO.

A FEW years ago I attended the superior court for the county of ———. The court adjourned late in the night, and the judge and bar being very weary, retired to their beds immediately thereafter. We were all in the same room, and immediately adjoining to us was the bar-room, and the chinks or vacant spaces in the partition enabled us to see and hear all that was going on. Shortly after we had retired, about forty men “pretty well corned, and up to everything,” entered the liquor room. No sooner had they arrived than they commenced boasting. “I’m the step-father of the earth!” said one. “I’m the yallow blossom of the forest!” exclaimed another, and requested his fellow-citizens then and there being “to nip the bud if they dare.” “I’m kin to a rattle-snake on the mother’s side!” shouted the earth’s ancestor. This seemed to be a “*socdoliger*” (which translated into Latin, means a *ne plus ultra*); for the “yallow blossom” stopped to consider what answer he could possibly make to this high claim of ancestry. A happy thought struck him. “Will you drink or fight?” roared he in a voice of thunder.

A silence ensued, or at least a subdued murmur, “’twixt which and silence there was nothing.” Perhaps a more embarrassing question could not have been propounded. The rattlesnake’s son was exceedingly thirsty—the sands of Africa were not more so; and liquor was the idol of his heart. He loved it dearly, but he loved fighting also; and here was a glorious chance to “lick” an adversary he had longed to get at. *Curia vult advisare*. He was deliberating between these equally pleasant alternatives, when it occurred to him that it was possible to accomplish both.

“*Both!*” responded he, “both. I’ll drink first—I’ll fight afterwards.”

A loud shout of approbation rose from the crowd. The liquor was called for—a pint of buck-eye whiskey—and impartially divided into two tumblers. The adversaries each took one, and grasping each other with their left hands, and touching the glasses together in token of amity, drained their respective glasses to the last drop, and then smashed them over the heads of each other, and at it they went. A clamour

ensued, so terrific that the English language has no word that would be sufficiently expressive of it. All sorts of encouragement were offered by the friends of each combatant, and an amateur, who had no particular predilection for either, jumped upon the counter, and commenced singing a poetic description of all the naval battles of America from the time of Columbus to the present day (which somebody has had the barbarity to put into miserable verse), keeping time with his heels on the counter. Just as he got to the one hundred and ninety-ninth verse, and was in the midst of what he called "The Wasp and Hornet engagement," his melody was stopped by a shrill cry from the "yellow blossom of the forest," who began to fall into the sere and yellow leaf, and gave manifest symptoms of being whipped.

"He bites!" screamed he.

"I get my livelihood by biting," said the other, relaxing his hold for a moment, and then taking a fresh start.

"'Nuff! 'nuff! take him off!"

Up rose the rattlesnake amidst loud cheering. His first impulse was to crow like a cock; then he changed his genus very suddenly, and declared that he was a "sea-horse of the mountain," and that he had sprung from the Potomac of the earth; then he was a bear with a sore head; a lion with a mangy tail; a flying whale; in short, he announced himself to be every possible and every impossible bird, beast, and fish, that the land or the sea has ever produced.

His wit having exhausted itself, some fresh excitement or novelty was requisite. "Let's have *Bingo*!" suggested a bystander. "Huzza for Bingo," echoed the crowd. Well, thought I, I don't know who and what Bingo is, but I do know, that when things reach their worst condition, any change must be for the better; and as any change from this terrible riot must be for the better, I say too, "Huzza for Bingo!" Alas!—as the sequel proved, I deceived myself greatly.

A gallon of whiskey with spice in it, and a gallon of Malaga wine, were placed on a large round table, around which about forty men seated themselves, having first elected a president *vivá voce*. The president elect commenced the game by singing at the top of his voice:—

"A farmer's dog sat on the barn-door,
And Bingo was his name, O!"

And they all shouted in chorus—

"And Bingo was his name, O!"

"B," said the president, "i" said the next, "n" the third, "g" the fourth, "o" the fifth; and then the chorus, taking up the letter "o," again shouted—

"And Bingo was his name, O!"

If either missed a letter, or said "n," for example, when he should have said "i," his penalty was to take a drink, and the company, as a privilege, drank with him; and with such slight interruptions as the time for drinking would occupy, this continued for about six hours.

At last the patience of the judge (who was quite a young man, and who is not more than a squirrel's jump from me while I write) became exhausted, and he called for the landlord. Our host, who was a tailor by trade, and who was also one of the Bingo fraternity, made his appearance with a candle in his hand, and a very affectionate and drunken leer upon his countenance.

"Go, sir," said the judge, "into the next room, and tell those drunken lunatics that if they don't stop their beastly noise, I'll commit every one of them to jail in the morning, for contempt of court."

"Oh, judge!" answered our host, holding up his unoccupied hand in token of his amazement; "Oh, judge, you'll give me the *double-breasted horrors*! Why, judge, work is *scarce*, and people's pertikler; and if I was to preliminary your orders to that crowd of gentlemen, why, judge, I'd pick up a thrashing in a little less than no time;" and off he staggered. Bingo was forthwith resumed, until gradually the chorus became more confused and indistinct. Chaos had come again. The actions of the virtuous gentlemen there assembled ceased to be above-board, and were carried on under the table. Some were snoring, others hiccuping. Bingo had ceased to be, except when some sleeper, feeling some painful sensation from his attitude, etc., would exclaim, "Oh!" which would wake up his immediate neighbour, who, the ruling passion strong in death, would exclaim—"And Bingo was——," and then relapse into such silence as a drunken man generally falls into.

Years have passed away since that awful night. Joys have blessed me; afflictions pained me; but all the vicissitudes of life have failed to drive out of my memory that terrible game and tune of Bingo. It haunts me like a dun in the day, like a ghost in the night. If I hear any one say "Oh!" the sequel immediately occurs to me—"And Bingo was his name,

O!" I am not much of an anatomist, but I am satisfied that when a post-mortem examination is had upon me, the whole matter of Bingo will be found incorporated with my pia-mater, or dura-mater, or some other portion of my brain. I can't tell the process or the manner by which, and in which, it has become a part and parcel thereof; but this much I know, that if my operator is a skilful surgeon, he will find there developed, in characters that *he* can read, the distinct statement that there was a farmer, who had a dog, whose peculiar habit and custom it was to sit upon the barn door, and that he answered to the classical and melodious name of "Bingo."

In a very heavy equity cause which was tried some years ago in our circuit, one of the jurors who had been inundated with cases from "Vesey Junior," expressed a wish "that Vesey Junior, had died *before* he (Vesey Jr.) had been born." I have something of the same feeling towards "Bingo." Have not you also, reader?

XLVII.

BOB HERRING.

It is not expected that a faithful description of the Devil's Summer retreat, in Arkansas, will turn the current of fashion of two worlds, from Brighton and Bath, or from Ballston or Saratoga, although the residents in the neighbourhood of that delightful place profess to have ocular demonstration, as well as popular opinion, that his satanic majesty, in warm weather, regularly retires to the "retreat," and "there reclines in the cool." The solemn grandeur that surrounds this distinguished resort is worthy of the hero, as represented by Milton; its characteristics are, darkness, gloom, and mystery; it is composed of the unrivalled vegetation and forest of the Mississippi Valley. View it when you will, whether decked out in all the luxuriance of a southern summer, or stripped of its foliage by the winter's blasts; it matters not, its grandeur is always sombre. The huge trees seem immortal, their roots look as if they struck to the centre of the earth, while the gnarled limbs reach out to the clouds. Here and there may be seen one of these lordly specimens of vegetation furrowed by the light-

ning; from its top to the base you can trace the subtle fluid in its descent, and see where it shattered off the limb, larger than your body, or turned aside from some slight inequality in the bark. These stricken trees, no longer able to repel the numerous parasites that surround them, soon become festooned with wreaths and flowers, while the damp airs engender on living tree and dead, like funeral drapery, the pendent moss, that waves in every breeze, and seems to cover the whole scene with the gloom of the grave. Rising out of this forest for ten square miles, is the dense cane-brake that bears the name of the "Devil's Summer Retreat;" it is formed by a space of ground, on which, seemingly from its superiority of soil, more delicate vegetation than surrounds it has usurped its empire. Here the reed, that the disciple of Izaak Walton plays over the northern streams like a wand, grows into a delicate mast, springing from the rich alluvium that gives it sustenance with the prodigality of grass, and tapering from its roots to the height of twenty or thirty feet, there mingling, in compact and luxuriant confusion, its long leaves. A portion of this brake is interwoven with vines of all descriptions, which makes it so thick that it seems to be impenetrable as a mountain. Here, in this solitude, where the noon-day sun never penetrates, ten thousand birds, with the instinct of safety, roost at night, and at the dawn of day, for a while, darken the air as they seek their haunts, their manure deadening, for acres around, the vegetation, like a fire, so long have they possessed the solitude. Around this mass of cane and vine, the black bears retire for winter-quarters, where they pass the season, if not disturbed, in the insensibility of sleep, and yet come out in the spring as fat as when they commenced their long nap. The forest, the waste, and the dangers of the cane-brake, add to the excitement of the Arkansas hunter; he conquers them all, and makes them subservient to his pursuits. Associated with these scenes, they to him possess no sentiment; he builds his log-cabin in a clearing made by his own hands, amid the surrounding grandeur, and it looks like a gipsy-hut among the ruins of a Gothic cathedral. The noblest trees are only valuable for fence-rails, and the cane-brake is "an infernal dark hole," where you can "see sights," "catch bears," and "get a fish-pole, ranging in size from a penny whistle to that of a young stove-pipe."

The undoubted hero of the Devil's Summer Retreat is old Bob Herring; he has a character that would puzzle three hundred metaphysicians consecutively. He is as bold as a lion, and as superstitious as an Indian. The exact place of his birth he

cannot tell, as he says his parents "travelled" as long as he can remember them. He "squatted" on the Mississippi, at its nearest point to the Retreat, and there erecting a rude cabin commenced hunting for a living, having no prospect ahead but selling out his "pre-emption right" and improvements, and again squatting somewhere else. Unfortunately the extent of Arkansas, and the swamp that surrounded Bob's location, kept it out of market, until, to use his own language, he "became the ancientest inhabitant in the hull of Arkansaw." And having, in spite of himself, gradually formed acquaintances with the few residents in this vicinity, and grown into importance from his knowledge of the country and his hunting exploits, he has established himself for life, at what he calls the "Wasp's diggings," made a potato patch, which he has never had time to fence in, talked largely of a corn-field, and hung his cabin round with rifle pouches, gourds, red-peppers, and flaming advertisements with rampant horses and pedigrees; these latter ornaments he looks upon as rather sentimental, but he excuses himself on the ground that they look "hoss," and he considers such an expression as considerably resembling himself. We have stated that Bob's mind would puzzle three hundred metaphysicians consecutively, and we as boldly assert that an equal number of physiologists would be brought to a stand by his personal appearance. The left side of his face is good-looking, but the right side seems to be under the influence of an invisible air-pump; it looks sucked out of shape, his perpendicular height is six feet one inch, but that gives the same idea of his length that the diameter gives of the circumference; how long Bob Herring would be if he were drawn out is impossible to tell. Bob himself says, that he was made on too tall a scale for this world, and that he was shoved in, like the joints of a telescope. Poor in flesh, his enormous bones and joints rattle when he moves, and they would no doubt have long since fallen apart, but for the enormous tendons that bind them together as visibly as a good-sized hawser would. Such is Bob Herring, who on a bear hunt will do more hard work, crack more jokes, and be more active, than any man living, sustaining the whole with unflinching good-humour, never getting angry except when he breaks his whiskey bottle, or has a favourite dog open on the wrong trail.

My first visit to the Devil's Summer Retreat was propitious, my companions were all choice spirits, the weather was fine, and Bob Herring inimitable. The bustling scene that prefaced the "striking the camp" for night lodgings, was picturesque

and animated ; a long ride brought us to our halting place, and there was great relief in again stepping on the ground. Having hobbled our horses, we next proceeded to build a fire, which was facilitated by taking advantage of a dead tree for a back-log ; our saddles, guns, and other necessities, were brought within the circle of its light, and lolling upon the ground we partook of a frugal supper, the better to be prepared for our morrow's exertions, and our anticipated breakfast. Beds were next made up, and few can be better than a good supply of cane tops, covered with a blanket, with a saddle for a pillow ; upon such a rude couch, the hunter sleeps more soundly than the effeminate citizen on his down. The crescent moon, with her attendant stars, studded the canopy under which he slept, and the blazing fire completely destroyed the chilliness of a southern December night.

The old adage of "early to bed and early to rise" was intended to be acted upon, that we might salute the tardy sun with the heat of our sport, and probably we would have carried out our intentions had not Bob Herring very coolly asked if any of us snored "unkimmonly loud," for he said his old shooting iron would go off at a good imitation of a bear's breathing ! This sally from Bob brought us all upright, and then there commenced a series of jibes, jokes, and stories, that no one can hear, or witness, except on an Arkansas hunt with "old coons." Bob, like the immortal Jack, was witty himself, and the cause of wit in others, but he sustained himself against all competition, and gave in his notions and experience with an unrivalled humour and simplicity. He found in me an attentive listener, and went into details, until he talked every one but myself asleep. From general remarks, he changed to addressing me personally, and as I had everything to learn, he went from the elementary to the most complex experience. "You are green in bar hunting," said he to me, in a commiserating tone, and with a toss of the head that would have done honour to Mr Brummel in his glory ; "green as a jinson weed—but don't get short-winded 'bout it, case it's a thing like readin', to be larnt ;—a man don't come it perfectly at once, like a dog does ; and as for that, they larn a heap in time ;—thar is a greater difference 'tween a pup and an old dog on a bar hunt than thar is 'tween a malitia man and a riglar. I remember when I couldn't bar hunt, though the thing seems onpossible now ; it only requires time, a true eye, and steady hand, though I did know a fellow that called himself a doctor, that said that couldn't do it if you was narvious. I asked him

if he meant by that agee and fever. He said it was the agee without the fever. Thar may be such a thing as narvious, stranger, but nothin' but a yarthquake, or the agee, can shake me; and still bar hunting aint as easy as scearing a wild turkey, by a long shot. The varmint aint a hog, to run with a w—h—e—w; just corner one—cotch its cub, or cripple it, and if you don't have to fight, or get out of the way, than thar aint no cat-fish in the Mississipp. I larnt that, nigh twenty year ago, and perhaps you would like to know about it?" Signifying my assent, Bob Herring got up in his bed, for as it was the bare ground he could not well get off of it, and, approaching the fire, he threw about a cord of wood on it, in the form of a few huge logs; as they struck the blazing heap the sparks flew upwards in the clear cold air, like a jet of stars; then fixing himself comfortably, he detailed what follows:—

"I had a knowing old sow at that time that would have made a better hunter than any dog ever heerd on; she had such a nose—talk 'bout a dog following a cold trail, she'd track a bar through running water. Well, you see, afor' I knowed her vertu', she came rushing into my cabin, bristles up, and fell on the floor, from what I now believe to have been regular scare. I thought she'd seen a bar, for nothing else could make her run; and, taking down my rifle, I went out a sort a carelessly, with only two dogs at my heels. Hadn't gone far afore I saw a bar, sure enough, very quietly standing beside a small branch—it was an old *he*, and no mistake. I crawled up to him on my hands and knees, and raised my rifle, but if I had fired I must have hit him so far in front, that the ball would have ranged back, and not cut his mortals. I waited, and he turned tail towards me, and started across the branch; afeerd I'd lose him, I blazed away, and sort a cut him slantindicularly through his hams, and brought him down; thar he sat, looking like a sick nigger with the dropsy, or a black bale of cotton turned up on eend. 'Twas not a judgmatical shot, and Smith thar" (pointing at one of the sleeping hunters) "would say so." Hereupon Bob Herring, without ceremony, seized a long stick, and thrust it into Smith's short ribs, who, thus suddenly awakened from a sound sleep, seized his knife, and, looking about him, asked, rather confusedly, what was the matter. "Would you," inquired Bob, very leisurely, "would you, under any circumstances, shoot an old *he* in the hams?" Smith very peremptorily told his questioner to go where the occupier of the Retreat in Summer is supposed to reside through the winter months, and went instantly to sleep again. Bob continued,—

"Stranger, the bar, as I have said, was on his hams, and thar he sot, waiting to whip somebody and not knowing whar to begin, when the two dogs that followed me came up, and pitched into him like a caving bank. I knowed the result afor the fight began; Brusher had his whole scalp, ears and all, hanging over his nose in a minute, and Tig was laying some distance from the bar, on his back, breathing like a horse with the thumps; he wiped them both out with one stroke of his left paw, and thar he sot, knowing as well as I did, that he was not obliged to the dogs for the hole in his carcass; and thar I stood, like a fool, rifle in hand, watching him, instead of giving him another ball. All of a sudden he caught a glimpse of my hunting shirt, and the way he walked at me with his two fore legs was a caution to slow dogs. I instantly fired, and stepped round behind the trunk of a large tree; my second shot confused the bar, and he was hunting about for me, when, just as I was patching my ball, he again saw me, and, with his ears nailed back to his head, he gave the d—t w—h—e—w I ever heerd, and made straight at me; I leaped up a bank near by, and as I gained the top my foot touched the eend of his nose. If I ever had the 'narvois' that was the time, for the skin on my face seemed an inch thick, and my eyes had more rings in them than a mad wild cat's. At this moment several of my dogs, that war out on an expedition of their own, came up, and immediately made battle with the bar, who shook off the dogs in a flash, and made at me agin; the thing was done so quick, that, as I raised my rifle, I stepped back and fell over, and, thinking my time was come, wished I had been born to be hung, and not chaw'd up; but the bar didn't cotch me: his hind quarters, as he came at me, fell into a hole about a root, and caught. I was on my feet, and out of his reach in a wink, but, as quick as I did this, he had cut through a green root the size of my leg; he did it in about two snaps, but weakened by the exertion, the dogs got hold of him, and held on while I blowed his heart out. Ever since that time I have been wide awake with a wounded bar—*sartinly, or stand off*, being my motto. I shall dream of that bar to-night," concluded Bob, fixing his blanket over him; and a few moments only elapsed before he was in danger of his life, if his rifle would go off at a good imitation of a bear's breathing.

Fortunately for me, the sun on the following morn was fairly above the horizon before our little party was ready for the start. While breakfast was being prepared, the rifles were minutely examined; some were taken apart, and every precaution used

to ensure a quick and certain fire. A rude breakfast having been despatched, lots were drawn who should go into the *drive* with the dogs, as this task in the Devil's Summer Retreat is anything but a pleasant one, being obliged at one time to walk on the bending cane—it is so thick for hundreds of yards that you cannot touch or see the ground—then crawling on your hands and knees, between its roots, sometimes brought to a complete halt, and obliged to cut your way through with your knife. While this is going on, the hunters are at *the stands*, places their judgments dictate as most likely to be passed by the bear, when roused by the dogs. Two miles might on this occasion have been passed over by those in the drive, in the course of three hours, and yet, although “signs were as plenty as leaves,” not a bear was started. Hard swearing was heard, and as the vines encircled the feet, or caught one under the nose, it was increased. In the midst of this ill-humour, a solitary bark was heard; some one exclaimed that was Bose! another shrill yelp that sounded like Music's; breathing was almost suspended in the excitement of the moment; presently another and another bark, was heard in quick succession; in a minute more, *the whole pack of thirty-five staunch dogs opened!* The change from silence to so much noise made it almost deafening. No idea but personal demonstration can be had of the effect upon the mind, of such a pack baying a bear in a cane-brake. Before me were old hunters; they had been moving along, as if destitute of energy or feeling, but now their eyes flashed, their lips were compressed, and their cheeks flushed; they seemed incapable of fatigue. As for myself, my feelings almost overcame me. I felt a cold sweat stealing down my back, my breath was thick and hot, and as I suspended it, to hear more distinctly the fight, for by this time the dogs had evidently come up with the bear, I could hear the pulsation of my heart. One minute more to listen, to learn which way the war was raging, and then our party unanimously sent forth a yell that would have frightened a nation of Indians. The bear was in his bed when the dogs first came up with him, and he did not leave it until the pack surrounded him; then finding things rather too warm, he broke off with a “*whew*” that was awful to hear. His course was towards us on the left, and as he went by, the cane cracked and smashed as if ridden over by an insane locomotive. Bob Herring gave the dogs a salute as they passed close at the bear's heels, and the noise increased, until, he said, “It sounded as if all creation was pounding bark.” The bear was commented on as he rushed by; one said he was

"a buster." "A regular-built eight years old," said another. "Fat as a candle," shouted a third. "He's a beauty of the Devil's Summer Retreat, with a band of angels after him," sang out Bob Herring. On the bear plunged, so swiftly that our greatest exertions scarcely enabled us to keep within hearing distance; his course carried him towards those at the stands, but getting wind of them he turned and exactly retraced his course, but not with the same speed; want of breath had already brought him several times to a stand, and a fight with the dogs. He passed us the second time within two hundred yards, and coming against a fallen tree, backed up against it, and showed a determination, if necessary, there to die. We made our way towards the spot, as fast as the obstacles in our way would let us, the hunters anxious to despatch him, that as few dogs as possible might be sacrificed. The few minutes to accomplish this seemed months, the fight all the time sounding terrible, for every now and then the bear evidently made a rush at the dogs, as they narrowed their circle, or came individually too near his person. Crawling through and over the cane-brake was a new thing to me, and in the prevailing excitement, my feet seemed tied together, and there *was always a vine directly under my chin*, to cripple my exertions. While thus struggling, I heard a suspicious cracking in my rear, and looking round I saw Bob Herring, a foot taller than common, stalking over the cane, like a colossus; he very much facilitated my progress, by a shove in the rear. "Come along, stranger," he shouted, his voice as clear as a bell, "come along, the bar and the dogs are going it, like a high-pressure nigger camp-meeting, and I must be thar to put a word in sartin." Fortunately for my wind I was nearer the contest than I imagined, for Bob Herring stopped just ahead of me, examined his rifle with two or three other hunters just arrived from the stands, and by peeping through the undergrowth, we discovered, within thirty yards of us, the fierce raging fight. Nothing distinctly, however, was seen; a confused mass of legs, heads, and backs of dogs, flying about as if attached to a ball, was all we could make out. A still nearer approach, and the confusion would clear off for a moment, and the head of the bear could be seen, with his tongue covered with dust, and hanging a foot from his mouth; his jaws were covered with foam and blood, his eyes almost protruding from their sockets, while his ears were so closely pressed to the back of his head, that he seemed destitute of those appendages; the whole indicative of unbounded rage and terror.

These glimpses of the bear were only momentary; his

persecutors rested but for a breath, and then closed in, regardless of their own lives, for you could discover, mingled with the sharp bark of defiance, the yell that told of death. It was only while the bear was crushing some luckless dog, that they could cover his back, and lacerate it with their teeth. One of the hunters, in spite of the danger, headed by Bob Herring, crept upon his knees, so near that it seemed as if another foot advanced would bring them within the circle of the fight. Bob Herring was first within safe shooting distance to save the dogs, and waving his hand to those behind him, he raised his rifle and sighted, but his favourite dog, impatient for the report, anticipated it by jumping on the bear, who throwing up his head at the same instant, the bear received the ball in his nose. At the crack of the rifle, the well-trained dogs, thinking less caution than otherwise necessary, jumped pell-mell on the bear's back, and the hardest fight ever witnessed in the Devil's Summer Retreat ensued; the hunter, with Bob, placed his gun almost against the bear's side, and the cap snapped; no one else was near enough to fire without hitting the dogs.—“Give him the knife!” cried those at a distance. Bob Herring's long blade was already flashing in his hand, but sticking a living bear is not a child's play; he was standing undecided, when he saw the hind legs of Bose upwards; thrusting aside one or two of the dogs with his hand, he made a pass at the bear's throat, but the animal was so quick that he struck the knife with his fore paw, and sent it whirling into the distant cane; another was instantly handed him, which he thrust at the bear, but the point was so blunt that it would not penetrate the skin. Foiled a third time, with a tremendous oath on himself and the owner of the knife “that wouldn't stick a cabbage,” he threw it indignantly from him, and seizing unceremoniously a rifle, just then brought up by one of the party, heretofore in the rear, he, regardless of his own legs, thrust it against the side of the bear with a considerable force, and blowed him through; the bear struggled but for a moment, and fell dead. “I saw snakes last night in my dreams,” said Bob, handing back the rifle to its owner, “and I never had any good luck the next day, arter such a sarcumstance; I call this hull hunt about as mean an affair as damp powder; that bar thar,” pointing to the carcass, “that thar, ought to have been killed, afor he maimed a dog.” Then, speaking energetically, he said, “Boys, never shoot at a bar's head, even if your iron is in his ear, it's unsartin; look how I missed the brain, and

only tore the smellers ; with fewer dogs and sich a shot, a fellow would be ripped open in a powder flash ; and I say, cuss caps, and head shooting ; they would have cost two lives to-day, but for them ar dogs, God bless 'em."

With such remarks, Bob Herring beguiled away the time, while he, with others, skinned the bear. His huge carcass, when dressed, though not over fat, looked like a young steer's. The dogs, as they recovered breath, partook of the refuse with relish ; the nearest possible route out of the Devil's Retreat was selected, and two horse-loads took the meat into the open woods, where it was divided out in such a manner that it could be taken home. Bob Herring, while the dressing of the bear was going on, took the skin, and on its inside surface, which glistened like satin, he carefully deposited the caul fat, that looked like drifted snow, and beside it the liver ; the choice parts of the bear, according to the gourmand notions of the frontier, were in Bob's possession ; and many years' experience had made him so expert in cooking it, that he was locally famed for this matter above all competitors. It would be as impossible to give the recipe for this dish, so that it might be followed by the gastronomes of cities, as it would to have the articles composing it exposed for sale in the markets. Bob Herring managed as follows : he took a long wooden skewer, and having thrust its point through a small piece of bear fat, he followed it by a small piece of the liver, then the fat, then the liver, and so on, until his important material was consumed ; when this was done, he opened the "bear's handkerchief," or caul, and wrapped it round the whole, and thus roasted it before the fire. Like all the secrets in cookery, this dish depends for its flavour and richness upon exactly giving the proper quantities, as a superabundance of one or the other would completely spoil the dish. "I was always unlucky, boys," said Bob, throwing the bear skin and its contents over his shoulder, "but I've had my fill often of caul fat and liver ; many a man who thinks he's *lucky*, lives and dies ignorant of it's virtue, as a 'possum is of corn cake. If I ever look dead, don't bury me until you see I don't open my eyes when its ready for eating ; if I don't move when you show me it, then I am a done goner sure." Night closed in before we reached our homes, the excitement of the morning wore upon our spirits and energy, but the evening's meal of caul fat and liver, and other similar "fixins," or Bob Herring's philosophical remarks, restored me to perfect health, and I shall recollect

that supper, and its master of ceremonies, as harmonious with, and as extraordinary as is, the Devil's Summer Retreat.

XLVIII.

SLAYING AN ASSASSIN.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of the south-western sections of the United States of America there is a large district of country called the Barrens, so named because the greater part of the earth is covered only with a species of tall coarse grass, interspersed with myriads of flowers, and occasional clumps of dwarf oak, having the expressive name of Black Jack. The heavy forest trees appear only along the larger streams of water. The soil is generally of a reddish clay, covered with a few inches of dark mould from the decayed leaves and the burning of the long dry grass in the autumn. But this deposit is soon worn off the highways, and the red clay, becoming exposed, makes a strong contrast with the green grass through which the road winds, revealing its course to the traveller, sometimes for miles a-head, as it passes over the eminences in the distance.

On a hot afternoon in July I was riding along one of these roads, my sweating horse moving heavily under me, whilst I was suffering intensely from the heat, notwithstanding a large umbrella over my head. I could see for miles around me, and there was no sign of a habitation anywhere, nothing met my gaze but the pale blue sky over my head, the immense masses of white, fleecy, bright clouds piled up above the horizon, and the sea of green grass spread out around me, over which arose the dancing appearance of the air like that above a kiln.

After travelling some miles under these circumstances, I perceived, at the distance of about half a mile to the left of the road, the tops of several trees which seemed to rise but a few feet above the ground. I knew at a glance that they stood in one of those basins or sinks peculiar to this region, and that I should find a cool refreshing shade, if not, as was very probable,

the mouth of a cave. I therefore bent my course through the grass to the spot, my horse making his way as through a grain field, and nipping now and then some attractive herb much to the annoyance of my bridle hand.

As I approached the basin my horse elevated his head, pointed his ears forward, first moving with increased animation, and then suddenly stopping. These movements gave me some uneasiness, lest there should be some wild animal in the thicket below; I therefore stopped for an instant on the margin of the sink, and looked down into it to discover, if possible, what had alarmed my beast. The sink was about thirty yards in the greatest diameter, of an oval form, full forty feet deep at its centre, and was filled with beautiful trees and under-growth, almost alive with birds.

As I perceived nothing which could account for my horse's alarm, I attempted to urge him down the sloping side of the basin, but he pricked his ears and stood stiff in his tracks. I laid on the whip, but he wheeled suddenly round and dashed off some yards before I could pull him up. Fixing myself firmly in my saddle, and tightening my reins, I lashed the alarmed animal again to the margin of the basin, but no exertion could induce him to make one step down the declivity. While contending with him, and just as I was thinking of dismounting, I heard a voice cry out, "Get off, and lead him down." I stared in the direction of the voice, but not being able to see the person, I called out in the tone and manner of that country, "Halloo there!"

"Get off, get off," answered the voice in a very familiar way.

"Where are you?" asked I.

"Here," replied the voice. Then the bushes began to crackle with the passage of some one through them, and in a moment there emerged from them a gigantic-framed, bareheaded old man, dressed in a light blue hunting shirt and leathern leggings, his hands covered with blood, and in one of them a large butcher's knife. My hair stood on end, and my horse, still more alarmed, sprang back and nearly threw me.

"Get off, man," said he in the most familiar and careless manner imaginable.

"What have you been doing?" I demanded.

"Hitch your nag thar to that saplin, an' come down here, an' I'll show you as fine a fire prong as ever h'isted tail."

"You've killed a buck, then?" said I, as I dismounted.

"But we had a tough time after him, not happ'nin' to have a dog along."

I tied my horse securely to a limb of the sapling indicated, and then penetrated the bushes with the old hunter to the spot where the immense buck lay, still bleeding from a large wound in the throat—such as are inflicted by these men of the wilds to reach the animal's heart, an operation which they term *sticking*.

"That's a fine buck," said I.

Giving a grave look of satisfaction as he shook the head by one of the deer's horns, he answered, with a slight pause between each word, "You may say that. It aint every day, in these barrens, you'll down such a feller."

"Is there any water in this sink? I am excessively thirsty."

"Thar an't not a drop of runnin' water nearer this spot than the Grove."

I found some consolation, however, for the want of water, in the refreshing coolness of the sink. The spot where we were was an open space of ten or twelve feet, free from undergrowth, and so protected by the thick foliage of the overhanging trees that the direct rays of the sun had not perhaps for years entered it. It was, consequently, as cool almost as an ice-house. I took off my hat to enjoy it more fully, and sat myself down on a stone, while the old hunter was deliberately preparing, with the aid of his belt, to hang up the buck by the hind feet to the limb of a small tree, in order that the blood might fully escape.

"I thought you said '*We* had a tough time with the buck'? You are alone."

"Oh! why they're gone back for a horse; an' Jack 'll soon be back, for he's a tearer runnin' an' ridin'. You see," pulling up the buck, "he'd make a body's back ache a spell to toat him over the Grove sich a day as this."

"Shall I assist you to hang him up?"

"Why, I don't keer if you do gi' me a bit of a lift—he's a whopper. Take keer of the blood; jist hold on to the limb. A dead limber animal makes an unhandy lift, you can't get no purchase."

We presently had the buck swinging from the limb. I resumed my seat upon the stone, and the old hunter, after wiping his bloody hands with leaves, threw himself full length upon the grass and weeds, to wait leisurely the coming of the horse. There he lay, with a countenance immoveable as an Indian's. His face was remarkably large, wrinkled and tanned, with bright blue eyes, overhung by enormous grey eyebrows, which were almost continuous with thick hair of the same colour hanging so as to cover nearly the whole forehead. Looking carelessly up at me, he began the usual introduction of such persons

to a regular attack of inquisitiveness—one of the attributes of a backwoodsman.

“Trav’lin’ fur, stranger?”

“To Nashville.”

“That’s over in Tennessee, aint it?”

“Yes.”

“Well, now how fur do you call it from hereabouts?”

“It is, perhaps, a hundred miles.”

“Your nag’s purty wild, ain’t it?”

“Yes, he’s a young traveller.”

“You’ll have to be careful ridin’ too fast sich hot weather. You’ll do him up.”

“I am.”

“Well, now that’s what we ought to a dumb beast, though it aint everybody that is. Some folks aint got no feelin’ for nothin’ only jist themselves.”

With the hope of cutting short his string of interrogations, I asked if sufficient time had not elapsed for the return of his companion. “Not yet,” carelessly uttered, was his reply; whereupon he returned to the charge evidently determined to satisfy himself before he stopped.”

“Come from the upper counties, I reckon?”

“Yes.”

“Well, if it’s no offence, what mout your name be?”

“Jones.”

“You aint no kin to Hugh Jones that went to the legislature, maybe?”

“Not at all.”

“I’ve seed him many a time at the musters. He’s staunch for Ball, and thar’s a good many in these parts that is. Who are they goin’ to vote for, for gov’nor, in your parts?”

“Indeed I’m not able to tell.”

“I aint for Ball myself, for all we’re purty much namesaked. He aint jist overloaded with sense for a gov’nor.”

“Then your name’s Ball, is it?”

“Why in these here parts I go by it anyhow; Peter Ball’s the name my daddy gave me, and I never used no other.”

“You’re very fond of hunting I should think?”

“I like a good hunt. Only I was jist a thinkin’ maybe you staid last night at the Knob?”

“No.”

“Bill Todd’s, maybe, o’ this side?”

“Yes, I staid at Todd’s.”

"I never was up that way much ; I've hearn talk about Todd's. Good 'commodations for travellers thar, they say."

"Yes, pretty good."

"Bill's a clever fellow, I expect ? "

"No doubt."

"Only some thinks he aint altogether the straight thing in dealin'."

I made no reply. He took up his gun from his side, threw it over him, and, sitting upright, began to examine the lock, while he continued talking, with his attention equally divided between the gun and my late host.

"Ned Saunders, when he lived up by the Knob, had a suit with Bill Todd 'bout a cow ; and they say they'd some mighty tough swearin' atween 'em." Here he threw out the priming, and carefully wiped the pan of his gun lock. "Ned knows our Sam, an' he tol' him a pack o' stuff about Bill." Having re-primed his rifle, he proceeded to examine the trigger and sights. "Ned's a cute feller himself, tradin' or swoppin' of a horse ; and maybe it aint jist all gospel." With a piece of tow he wiped the barrel from one end to the other. "Dick Todd, down here in the Grove, is a man as straight as a shingle, an' as first-rate a shot as ever pulled trigger."

The old hunter now raised up his head in the attitude of intense listening, and then told me that Jack was coming—he heard the horse. In a few moments I myself could distinguish a singular sound, which I knew to arise from the galloping of a horse through the grass. As it approached us, all of a sudden we heard a crack like the snapping of a stick—then the snort of a horse—and in the next moment the sound of an animal dashing through the bushes and into the grass. "It's your nag broke loose," said the hunter, as we both sprang out of the thicket. My horse was gone. We ran out of the sink and discovered him, head and tail up, bounding through the grass, with the long-legged Jack in chase after him, mounted, bare-back, with a halter in place of a bridle, upon a little raw-boned, long-tailed, spradling-gaited colt, whose galloping approach had the moment before startled my fugitive beast.

"Stop thar, Jack," bawled out the old hunter, with the voice of a trumpet, "let him be, you fool ! "

"Let us surround him," said I.

"No, no ; you stand off thar. You Jack, hitch the colt to that saplin' on the edge of the sink, and then keep off roun' that side. We'll go," addressing me, "jist keerless-like off a

bit this away. He'll make up to the colt, if we let him be a leetle, and then we kin easy ketch him." Matters were arranged accordingly, and the result was as the hunter had anticipated. My horse, after kicking up his heels, curving his neck, and snorting a few times, gradually became composed, and making a circle went up to the colt. After putting their noses together, and squealing two or three times, the two animals made each other's acquaintance, and my horse was secured. But my saddle-bags had fallen off in the grass, which required some search before they were found; but the head-stall of my bridle was not to be found; I was therefore compelled to use the reins (which had remained attached to the sapling) as a halter to lead my horse, while I walked home with the hunter and his son. For, upon grave deliberation, this was determined to be the wisest course, as Ball had a neighbour who owned a real stylish plated-bit bridle, "that he'd be sure to sell when he seed the silver," whereas in the thinly-settled open Barrens it was a considerable distance to any cabin, and there was little probability of arriving before nightfall at a "house of entertainment"—travelling on the hot road on foot as I should be compelled to do.

The buck was fastened over the colt's back, who, being accustomed to such portering, was led quietly on; after Jack in the van, the old hunter took the centre, and I brought up the rear, leading my troublesome steed, who would not suffer me to hoist my umbrella. Ball had quite as much occupation in pushing up the buck, first on one side then on the other, to preserve the necessary equipoise, so that there was little or no conversation between us as we went wading along through the grass, one after the other, like so many Indians, exposed to the direct rays of a burning sun. Now and then, however, we found some refuge from the heat under the clumps of Black Jacks, without whose occasional shade I could not have borne the fatigues of the walk. After making several miles, the ground gradually ascended for five or six hundred yards, and we found ourselves on the top of a ridge from which we beheld the Grove scarce half a mile distant. I shall never forget how beautiful it appeared to me. Wearied, scorched in the sun, parched with thirst, and worn out with my walk through the hot and dreary open plains, I looked to the far-spreading woods as to a promised land; and, with a good deal of impatience, repeatedly urged the leisurely-moving Jack to quicken his gait. At last we entered the Grove, and bade farewell to the plains of grass and intense heat, for the scene had at once changed to

the very reverse. Here in the deep woods the sun was so completely excluded that the moist ground was only covered with short green sward, while the crowded trees limited the prospect to a few yards. Taking off my hat, I expressed the extreme delight I felt at finding myself in the change.

"Well, it's not jist so hot as comin' up that ridge," said the old hunter with almost a smile.

"But when shall we come to the water?"

"Why if you don't mind the brush, we bear a leetle off to the right, an' git to the creek considerably quicker."

"I shall not regard pushing through the underwood; let us take the shortest course to the water, for I'm really suffering very much with thirst."

"Agreed," said Ball, in his usual slow and indifferent manner. "I'm purty dry myself, for I aint tasted a drop since the sun wasn't near straight (long before twelve o'clock). We wasn't a huntin' when we seed the buck this mornin', an' hadn't no canteen, nor nothin' long with us."

Presently we came to the clear rapid little stream, running hurriedly over its gravelly and sandy bed. My poor horse was ungovernable—he plunged at once into the water; holding to the reins, I dipped my leathern cap into the delicious fluid, and drank to my full satisfaction. The old hunter turned up the brim of his old wool hat, and filling the space between it and the crown, by immersing it in the stream, soon satisfied his thirst.

As Jack's hat was not stiff enough to serve the purpose of a cup, he threw himself flat upon the gravelly margin, and, resting with his hands in the stream itself, put his mouth to the current at no great distance from that of the colt.

"Water's a capital thing when a body's real dry," said Ball.

"Yes, I'll be darned if it aint," uttered Jack, as he rose to his feet, with many a drop trickling from his foretop, nose, and chin, all of which had come in contact, as well as his lips, with the water.

After due praises of the goodness of water under our circumstances, we took up our line of march. I trusted to my halter for riding my horse the few steps over the creek; Ball and Jack both took off their shoes, rolled up their trowsers, and waded across. It was now, the old man "reckoned," about a mile to his habitation.

Not long after leaving the creek we fell into a small pathway, which, after a while, led us through a remarkably dense

thicket, when Jack, who had not spoken but once before since our departure from the sink, suddenly halted, and in a voice of great agitation—his eyes staring open—cried out, “Daddy! I’ll tell ye what, if I didn’t see Tom Hinkle, this here aint no buck.”

“Whereabouts?” demanded the old man very coolly, but with very evident concern.

“Don’t you see yon shell-bark?” pointing to a large hickory tree, “Well, jist by it I seed his powder-horn movin’ along.”

The old hunter leisurely but instantly examined his gun lock, saw that its pan was well filled with priming, shouldered his gun again, and ordered Jack to keep a good look-out, and go on.

I felt somewhat disturbed at all this, and inquired of Ball what it meant. Keeping his eyes perpetually moving in every direction, while he was speaking in broken sentences, he enabled me to gather that Tom Hinkle was one of those foreign wretches, who find their way here and there into, and infect, many of the newly-settled parts of this country—a sort of men, who, reared in pauperism, and educated in armies or piratical vessels, are filled with the worst passions and the lowest impulses of our nature; depending chiefly upon fraud for support, defying all restraint, and spending most of their time in the vilest dissipation. It seems that Hinkle had defrauded a neighbour of Ball’s out of a horse; that this neighbour had prosecuted Hinkle for a forgery committed in the transaction; that Ball’s evidence had nearly proved sufficient to convict Hinkle of the crime, which would have caused him to be imprisoned in the Penitentiary; that Hinkle had sworn to take Ball’s life for “his interference;” that “he was devil enough to do it;” and, indeed, that he had upon two occasions, when Ball’s two grown sons were from home, as was now the case, attempted the diabolical act.

“Do you really think,” I inquired, “that Hinkle will make another attempt upon your life now, when your son and I are both with you?”

“You’ve got no guns, an’ Hinkle aint agoin to come too close. If it’s him, an’ he’s after me, he’ll take a shot an’ split for it. He’s as big a coward as ever run.”

“Are you sure that Jack saw any one?”

“That’s no doubt, an’ I reckon it was Hinkle. Jack’s got a sharp eye, an’ Polly thought t’other day she had a glimpse-

of him prowlin' roun' the tobaccor pen. His powder-horn can't easy be mistook, for it's striped of a red and blue."

"Would it not be your best place to——"

"By jingo, that's him now!" cried Ball, and instantly heard the report of a gun from the bushes not twenty steps off. Hinkle had fired at Ball, but missed him.

There stood the sturdy old hunter, planted firmly on the earth; his cheek to his rifle, his eye pointing along its barrel directly at his enemy, and his finger ready to spring its hair trigger,—the slightest touch of which would have caused the deadly ball to fly at his enemy's head. Rigidly maintaining his position and aim, the old man called out in a distinct and composed voice—"Come out, Tom Hinkle, or I'll fire!" Looking closely at the spot from which the smoke of Hinkle's gun was still rising, I could plainly discover amidst the leaves his head and breast.

"Shoot him, daddy," cried Jack.

"Come out from the bushes," repeated Ball.

"Fire, daddy."

"For God's sake," cried I, "don't disturb your father!" for, strange now to think, I felt at that moment willing that the fiendish scoundrel should be shot.

There passed a moment of intense and anxious suspense; Hinkle standing petrified in the bushes, glaring like a wild animal at the old hunter whose deadly aim rested immoveably on him; Jack holding the halter of the colt, laden with the dead buck on one side of his father; and I near my horse on the other—all facing the devoted skulker.

"Are you commin' out?" demanded Ball, in a voice of slight impatience.

"If t'other two will keep off, I will," answered the desperate and alarmed Hinkle.

"You needn't be afeerd of them, they shan't interfer'."

"But how do I know that?"

"Are you commin' out?" said Ball decidedly.

"Yes, I am; let them two hold up their hands and make oath they'll keep off."

Jack having the utmost confidence in his father's ability to compete with Hinkle, especially under existing circumstances, instantly raised one hand and bawled out, "I'll be durned if I'll go near you!" I called out to him that I could not take an oath for such a wretch; but that I gave him my word not to interfere.

He then came slowly and timidly out of the bushes into a more open space, holding his gun in his left hand, with its butt near the ground; Ball raised his head, but still kept his rifle pointed at him. Catching a glimpse of hope from this state of affairs, he addressed the old man in a loud voice, and with a manner half assured and half conciliatory. "Ball, do you think if I hadn't wanted just to scare you, I couldn't hit you easy enough? You've seen Tom Hinkle shoot at a mark;" and he halted for a parley within arm's length of a tree, about thirty feet distant from the pathway in which our party stood.

"Drop your smooth bore," said Ball, taking no notice of Hinkle's subterfuge.

"What! an empty gun?" repeated Hinkle with affected surprise and carelessness.

"You'd better drop it," said Ball, drily, as he replaced his face to regain his aim.

"She's empty, I tell you; what are you afeerd of?"

"I aint afeerd of Tom Hinkle, nor no sich coward; but that aint the rifle you fired at me; it's another gun, and she's got a load in her."

"Yes, she has," interrupted Jack; "she's crammed with slugs for a scatterin' shot; for if that aint Hugh Fry's smooth bore, I never seed a gun."

"Now, you know, Ball," said Hinkle, about to remonstrate against Jack's interference.

"Hol' you gab, Jack," bellowed Ball, in a tone that effectually checked both. "Now, down wi' that gun;" he added, in a manner that showed there was to be no delay.

"Well, then," uttered the scoundrel, with apparent resignation; and then lowering his hand half way to the ground, he suddenly sprang behind the tree. "Now, Ball," he exclaimed, in tones of defiance, "keep off, or you are a dead man!"

"Jack and I looked at each other in utter amazement; for we had considered Hinkle completely in the power of his antagonist. Now, as if by magic, he had the advantage in the conflict; for, besides being much the younger and more active man, he was behind a tree, while Ball stood in the pathway unprotected.

"Make for the tree, daddy, behin' the colt," cried Jack.

"No, I shan't, you fool;" with feigned disdain, and, quick as lightning, he gained the very position indicated by Jack. For a moment after this movement not a syllable was uttered. Each of the combatants seemed undetermined what to do.

Fearing that Hinkle might take it into his fiendish head to shoot Jack, who stood now in the direct line between the other two, I beckoned to him to remove to my safer position, which he did. As he joined me, comprehending my motive, he said, "He's too big a coward to shoot at me; he knows if he was to empty his gun at me, daddy would have him certain."

Ball and Hinkle, with their guns elevated ready to be levelled at the first advantage, were engaged peeping and drawing their heads back behind their respective trees; both no doubt still undecided as to further steps, should their present position continue much longer.

"I wish," said Jack, in an under-tone, "he was a little bit furdur from where he shot at daddy, I'd git his rifle."

"You really think he had two guns?"

"May be he hadn't! that's jist like a coward,—for fear he couldn't load quick enough, if he didn' hit first time."

They were still watching each other,—peeping, drawing back, half-levelling their guns as they thought some advantage existed, and then shrinking suddenly back as it passed away; while Jack, whose solicitude for his father would not allow him to be an idle spectator, put the colt's halter into my hand, and then throwing himself on his hands and feet, stole, noiselessly as a cat, towards the spot where he supposed Hinkle had left his rifle.

I began to reflect that two guns in the hands of brave men, ought not to be opposed to one in the hands of a coward, however criminal or fiendish he had been; and I felt gratified with the conviction that the brave old hunter would not give Jack the means of loading the gun if he should find it.

At last, Hinkle, worn out with the fruitless watchings to gain some advantage, or to escape from his adversary, and hearing something moving behind him, from the spot where he had fired, called out, in a voice that rang through the woods,—“Ball, promise me you won't touch me with your rifle, and 'pon the honour of a man I'll give up fair.” The old hunter took not the least notice of this overture, thinking, perhaps, how little confidence was to be placed in the words of so perfidious a wretch.

The next moment, Jack, with a face flushed to crimson, dashed out, bearing the rifle uplifted in his hand; and, filled with vengeance at the sight of the gun which had just been discharged at his father, he exclaimed, as he made his way to the old man, “Here, daddy's the lyin' coward's rifle, gi' me a load!”

Hinkle, not doubting that he was to have two armed adversaries, dashed off; and, at the same moment, Ball's gun was discharged after him. But the bushes continued to crackle, and I saw Hinkle making his way with prodigious strides. Ball was already in pursuit, reloading his gun as he ran, with Jack close behind, bellowing for a "load." In a moment they were all out of sight in the thicket. I hitched the horses as quietly as possible and followed on. I immediately found evidence that the old hunter's aim, suddenly as it was taken, had been unerring; for I found blood every few yards on the bushes. When I had made my way through the thicket, the woods were comparatively free from undergrowth, and I could discover the fugitive and his pursuers close upon him, near a hundred yards in advance of me. They gained on him every instant. At last, when he found he must inevitably be overtaken, he turned upon his pursuers; and he and Ball, at the same instant, levelled their guns and fired. Jack fell to the ground, and Ball and Hinkle were the next moment clasping each other in a desperate personal conflict.

As I gained the scene of action, Jack sat up and pressed his hands below his knees, where he had received the ball. Almost out of breath, and without any definite aim in the confusion of the moment, I approached the wrestling and gory combatants—for they were both besmeared with blood.

"Keep off, if you're a man," cried Hinkle, in a hoarse altered voice, fearing my co-operation with his deadly antagonist.

"For your life, stand off," cried Ball, equally unwilling to be assisted or separated. Their guns, hats, and parts of their torn clothing, lay scattered around; while panting, their faces flushed, and staring at each other like demons, they continued their furious combat. Hinkle made a desperate effort to throw Ball on the ground, but he kept his feet, and, throwing his head and shoulders forward, gave Hinkle a violent shove, which forced him several steps back before he recovered his balance. Hinkle now snatched the handle of his butcher knife, which hung in his belt; Ball jerked him forward to counteract his design, but the blade escaped from the scabbard, and Hinkle thrust it at Ball's breast, who, grasping its sharp edge in his naked hand, with one act slung it from his own breast and Hinkle's grasp. As if this had added to his rage, Ball gave one furious lunge, and his enemy rolled upon the earth—yet clutched in battle.

Sick at the horrid spectacle, I moved towards them to draw

them asunder; but Jack, who had crawled up to the spot, stood on one knee, holding a gun butt uppermost, and, with the look of a fury, threatened to knock out my brains if I touched the combatants.

They were becoming excessively exhausted, but they fought on, sometimes one above—sometimes the other. At last, Hinkle was unable to extricate himself from beneath Ball; but he suddenly got both hands around Ball's neck, and made a fiendish attempt to choke him—but he was too feeble for the act. Ball jerked up his head, and, without difficulty, disengaged his clutched throat; then, putting his knee on Hinkle's breast, he drew his butcher knife, pointed it to his breast,—when I grasped his arm.

Jack held the gun over my head menacing a blow; Ball glared his wild blood-shot eyes in my face—and poor Hinkle was closing his for ever.

"Let go his arm," cried the strange-looking son.

"Let me go," cried the desperate father.

"The man is dead," I replied.

Jack lowered the gun. And Ball, looking in the face of his dying enemy, with a countenance in which surprise and horror were newly mixed with almost demoniacal ire, arose slowly off his body. Then, rough as was his nature, and furious as had just been his passion, the old hunter dropped upon the ground and fainted away.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SLAYING AN ASSASSIN.

CHAPTER II.—TRIAL AND FUNERAL.

PASSING over the sad scene that followed at Ball's house, and the interview between the old man and his agonized wife, we proceed with our story. Ball resolved upon making an immediate surrender, and, accompanied by his neighbour Burns, his son, and myself, set out on his manly errand. We rode on for a while perfectly silent. In the course of our ride we made every possible effort to draw him into conversation, and to force him to think of the surrounding objects; without success how-

ever, for he listened vacantly, answered "Yes" or "No," and relapsed into his severe and gloomy silence. About a mile before we reached the house of the magistrate, a young man, on a very spirited horse, emerged from the woods a few yards ahead of us; he stopped at the mouth of the little path until we rode up; he had evidently heard of the business to be transacted at the magistrate's that morning, and was on his way to witness it, for he stared at Ball with that sort of stupid solemnity which most uneducated people think is necessarily to be worn on such occasions. Burns's vexation at the young man's manner, and his desire to prevent its having any unpleasant effect on Ball, induced him to speak rather rudely to our new companion. "What are you sitting there on your prancing nag like a fool for?" cried Burns to him, in a voice of thunder that made the youth start. "Will your father be at Squire Buckley's too?"

"Yes, sir," answered the young man not very audibly; "he's there now, I expect, he started a good while before me."

"Well then," said Burns, "I'll tell you what, the best thing you can do is just to ride on as fast as you please, and tell them we'll be after you in a jiffy." Away went the young man at a brisk trot ahead of us.

"I hate a fool," continued Burns, "and above all a young one like that fellow, that hardly knows how to curry a horse. I'll tell you what, if there's a parcel of numbskulls at the squire's, I'll turn every rascal of them out of the room, plague me if I don't."

"Oh, its no odds, Harry," said Ball, with much less depression of manner; "I don't keer who's ther, or ef all the neighbourhood comes."

"Well, plague me if I don't, then. I'll tell you what, I've no notion of having a parcel of open-mouthed, pop-eyed blockheads about when I've got anything to do."

"Well, well," said Ball, "never mind this time; ef there's ever so many, I wouldn't like you in particular to find any fault about anybody being ther."

"Agreed; for I'll tell you what, Peter, our meeting Dick Tomkins has made you a confounded sight less a blockhead than you have been all the way on the road, and may be, if there's a grist of them at the squire's, you'll get your senses back and behave like a man."

Ball looked steadily at Burns for a moment, as if deliberating what reply to make; but then he turned away his eyes without uttering a word.

"Peter," said Burns, with a kindness of manner that contrasted strangely with his coarse tones and rough language; "Peter, if you think I haven't got proper feeling about this business, I can tell you one thing, you've lost your road; but devil dance me if I'm going to humour your foolishness, especially now, when we are almost at Buckley's, and the whole thing is to be tried and over."

"Harry," said Ball, "you're right."

"To be sure I am; now, hang it, man, pluck up; if you don't care for yourself, nor me neither, just remember you've got seven children, and I've got five; and then, Peter, our children have mothers, and they've all got such things as ears, and feelings into the bargain, I can tell you that."

"Harry," repeated Ball, with some animation, "I say you're right."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Burns; and, addressing me, he added, "You see the thing clear enough, stranger?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Now, Peter," continued Burns, "I'll tell you what, I don't want you at all up any way, but plague me if I'd like you to be down in the mouth, no shape, at the squire's; there's Buckley's fence, and we shall be there in a twinkling; so I depend on you, if it comes in the way, to call Hinkle a rascal every bit as often as if the scoundrel was alive ready again to take your life in the cowardly way he tried it."

Our road led us round the outer fence of the magistrate's farm to a lane which divided it into nearly equal parts.

There were about a hundred and fifty acres under cultivation, chiefly in Indian corn. The tall fences, the extensive stabling, the abundance of cattle in the pastures and standing in the lane, as is usual in this country, and the large orchard near the dwelling, gave unequivocal evidence that we were approaching one of the principal men of the neighbourhood. We now perceived a great many horses hitched to the posts of the yard fence, and several groups of persons in the yard and on the fence, for there is a singular propensity in this country to sit, perched up on the top rail of a fence, with the feet lodged on one of the rails to secure the position, while conversation, or argument, or a "bargain," is driven leisurely on. As we rode up to the fence every eye was turned upon us; no one approached, however, but the magistrate, who was ready to greet us the moment we dismounted, performing the rites of hospitality before he assumed the duties of a magistrate. Burns crossed the blocks into the yard first, Ball followed; the squire shook us all by

the hand very heartily, when the whole company came forward and did likewise.

After this we were pressed to take some refreshment, which being declined, Ball opened his business in coming there by saying, "Squire, I've killed Tom Hinkle, an' I've come to give myself up." No one uttered a syllable, but there was not a face that did not strongly express, as regards the killing, "Amen." The squire proposed holding the court under the trees in the yard, on account of the warmth of the morning and the number of persons present, for the news had spread like lightning over the neighbourhood, and everybody was curious to know and see as much of the matter as possible. In a few minutes a number of chairs and a table were brought forth and arranged in the yard, and the court was opened. The whole scene was exceedingly strange and interesting to me. The yard was so covered with locust trees, a few forest oaks spreading out their broad arms far above, that scarcely a direct ray of the sun fell upon the thick-set green grass that hid the earth.

The chairs were arranged irregularly on each side and in front of the table, behind which sat two magistrates.

At a few yards distance, on one side, was the comfortable two-story log-house, from the ground-floor windows of which looked the wife and daughters of Squire Buckley, and other females; the chairs under the trees were occupied by some of the homespun-dressed company, while others stood behind or leaned against the trees. Squire Buckley, with his perfectly white head (he must have been at least sixty) and quiet sensible face, had at his side a brother magistrate much younger, with a narrow forehead, round face, and immense lower jaw. Ball was seated in front of the table, in the space between the irregular rows of chairs, with Burns and myself near him; a little distance from the court, between it and the fence along which without stood the horses, were several negroes, slaves of Buckley, whose black faces gazed intently on the scene. Squire Buckley called on Ball to state what he had to say: the old man rose, and, with a composure and clearness I was not prepared to expect from him, alluded to the chief points, and then offered me as a witness of the whole affair. I gave substantially an account of everything from my encounter with Ball at the sink to our departure from the scene of action between Ball and Hinkle. All present listened with breathless silence; Ball kept his eyes fixed on the grass; Squire Buckley maintained throughout a calm, steady attention, and then with great mild-

ness of manner cross-examined me. Burns was the only person whose attention was not wholly given to the testimony and the examination; he was, during the whole time, watching the countenances of the company, to ascertain if there was the slightest feeling in the bystanders against Ball; and it was evident enough from the expression of his own countenance that he detected nothing disagreeable to him. The two magistrates leaned their elbows on the table and consulted together for a moment or two, when Buckley rose, and, with a fine deep voice, said, "Peter Ball, we are of the opinion that Hinkle himself brought about the circumstance that forced you to take his life in defence of your own. There are no grounds whatever for committing you for trial, and you are now discharged free from all blame."

In an instant the whole scene was changed; the silence and order which had just reigned were gone, and the bustling noisy congratulations of Ball's neighbours showed that he had been rather raised than lowered in their estimation by his battle and victory over the detested Hinkle. Though Squire Buckley insisted on our stopping for dinner, Ball's impatience to return to his family, and Burns' desire to have Hinkle interred and out of the way as soon as possible, made us decline his hospitality, and we set off immediately, accompanied by ten or a dozen of the company. On our way back every one perceived Ball's extreme depression and misery of mind. The effort he had just made at the squire's was now followed by a deeper gloom than I had before noticed in him. Every one tried, in some way, to lessen his depression, but with the effect, however, of oppressing him intolerably. In consequence of this I rode close by his side, to interrupt, as much as possible, this annoyance. I now thought I perceived symptoms of approaching alienation of mind in the old man; for, instead of the thoughtful character of his rough visage, his countenance repeatedly expressed alternation of torpor and momentarily excessive alarm. On our return to Ball's house, we found eight or ten persons collected there in the yard; his wife and daughter were at the fence deadly pale and trembling with anxiety. The moment we dismounted a scene of congratulations took place between those in the yard and Ball, similar to that at the squire's; as soon, however, as possible, I got him into the house with his family, where, after speaking a moment to Jack, I left him. I found Burns and most of the company in the room with the dead body; to my surprise the corpse was dressed in a coarse shroud, and already placed in a rough coffin, all of which the

family of Burns had been charged to have done by the time of our return. Burns had removed the flat lid of the coffin to show the face of the corpse to our companions from the squire's, and was descanting on the strong expression of villany which he swore was marked on every feature and wrinkle, even then in death. After every one had satisfied his curiosity in looking at the corpse, Burns directed the carpenter who had made the coffin to nail down the top, when some one suggested that perhaps Ball would not be satisfied without seeing it himself. Burns did not see the sense of the thing, but at length yielded to the proposal, and Ball was called in. He entered the room with an extreme wildness of countenance, and approached the coffin slowly and timidly; he gazed intently for some moments in his dead enemy's face, and then, without saying a word, marched directly out of the room to the other part of the house.

Burns had had everything ready for the interment of Hinkle's body attended to; the grave was dug under some trees in a corner of one of his fields, and a sort of rude bier was prepared to carry the body to the place. Five or six of the company removed the coffin in their hands from the room to the road, where it was placed on the bier. Much to my surprise, everything was conducted in the most orderly and respectful manner; nothing, indeed, was neglected that usually was observed in their simple funeral processions; we marched two and two after the coffin, and in more silence and reserve than are generally observed on such occasions in more refined communities. Many of those in the procession took their turns in carrying the coffin to the grave; for, although our way was smooth and shady, yet the day was warm, and the body very heavy.

Just as we had lowered the coffin into its place, and two persons had taken up spades to fill up the grave, to the utter astonishment of every one present, Ball suddenly sprang on the top of the fence near us. His mind was evidently deranged. "What are you a doin'?" he demanded roughly.

"Filling up the grave," said Burns.

"A'n none o' you said nothin' over him; I know'd that 'ould be, an' I'll say somethin' myself; he shan't be buried like a dumb brute."

"To be sure," said one of the company, "it's proper for somebody to say something over the corpse; and Mr Burns, I think, is the fittenist person here to do it."

"Where's preacher Waller?" asked Ball, wildly; "who went for preacher Waller?"

"Nonsense, Peter," thundered forth Burns, "if it'll satisfy you, I'll preach over him, and that will do just as well as preacher Waller's long whinings. Friends," continued Burns, pulling off his hat, in which he was imitated by all present, "friends, we've put in the grave a fellow-creature, and we are just going to cover him with mother earth, for him to sleep till God wills him to wake up; its beyond doubt our duty to forget his bad doings at such a time, and only to think a being like ourselves has ended his miserable life. I hope God will have mercy on his soul, for it needs it, I can solemnly tell you; but it isn't for us to judge a fellow-creature, let him be ever so bad, at such a time. I say, friends, let us hope God will show mercy to the soul of the body that lies here in this coffin; for I can tell you one thing, a bigger scoundrel never walked on this earth, that's my gospel say of him. But, for all, it's beyond doubt our duty to hope God will have mercy on his soul. Amen.

"Now, boys," he continued, clapping his hat on his head, "let's finish our work and be off."

While others were filling up the grave, Burns and I crossed the fence and persuaded Ball to return home immediately with me, Burns promising to remain until everything was properly arranged about the ground. As we walked back to his house, I was satisfied that the old man's mind was under considerable derangement; a circumstance that gave me excessive pain; for, although it had not been twenty-four hours since our first meeting, yet I felt an identification with him, and, indeed, a sort of attachment to him that I could not well account for. We had not got far on our way before we met his daughter searching for him; the poor girl looked almost as wild as her father; she told him that "Jack wanted him." Two or three times he expressed his determination to return to the grave, but his daughter's entreaties soon induced him to proceed on home. Shortly after our arrival at the house, the whole company from the grave reached there. Burns hurried them away as soon as possible, and even sent home all his family except his son. Burns joined me in the yard for a consultation; he was extremely discomposed at the state of mind in which his friend now evidently was, and, for the first time, he seemed somewhat embarrassed. At last we agreed to despatch young Burns for medicine, and he soon returned with a vial of calomel, and another of laudanum; for the first article, an immense dose was immediately administered; the giving of the laudanum was postponed, by the advice of Ball's wife, until

night. Burns continued in attendance on his friend, while I sought, in the room lately occupied by Hinkle's body, a few hours' repose, which I greatly needed. About two o'clock in the day Ball awoke; his mind was comparatively composed, and, to the extreme delight of his wife and daughter, he took some nourishment. I shall never forget the appearance of joy which those two simple-minded women manifested while they held his repast before him, and served him as he ate it. My horse now stood hitched in the fence, and I went in to take my leave of Ball. "Farewell, friend Ball," said I to the old man, stretching out my hand to him.

"You're goin', then, stranger?" said he.

"Yes; I am sorry I cannot spend a few days with you, but I must go on now as fast as I can."

"I'm sincere sorry, too, you can't stay, an' I'm a great deal more sorry at——"

"Oh, never mind that," said I, shaking his rough hand, which still clasped mine.

"Well, stranger, you're a man, an' Peter Ball's roof's yourn, and he'll always be real happy—the same as though you're his own blood—to see you eatin' alongside of him; and I hope that'll happen many a time, ef God spares us."

"I trust so too," said I, shaking his hand for the last time.

"Well, God bless you," said the old man, with an emotion that made me hasten away to bid Jack farewell, who clasped my hand tightly, but did not utter a syllable. In the passage I took my leave of the mother and daughter, the former saying, "But, stranger, you didn't tell Peter when you thought you'd be this way agin." Upon informing her that I hoped to see them in a few weeks, she absolutely smiled with delight,—no doubt, at the idea of the gratification her husband would derive from it. Burns walked out to the fence with me, accompanied by two neighbours who had just arrived. As I shook Burns' hand, he said—

"Well, stranger, I can tell you one thing, I know you; do you know Harry Burns?"

"Yes," I answered, "well."

"You know where he lives?" he continued.

"Yes."

A hearty additional shake of hands, and a mutual *good-bye* closed our parting, and I spurred my horse on his road.

About three weeks after my departure spoken of above, in returning on my journey, I found myself again at Ball's house. He had perfectly recovered from his slight derangement of

mind ; but, as his wife had anticipated, he was still gloomy, and spent much of his time in solitary rambles with his gun and dogs.

L.

ESTABLISHING THE SCIENCE.

THE persecutions of the Mesmerists will one day make a curious volume, for they will be written, of course. The disciples of Galileo, Harvey, Jenner, &c., have been exalted in their struggles and sufferings, and those of Mesmer even more brightly will shine in martyrology. Seriously, the trials to which travelling Mesmerists are put, are, at times, humiliating and painful enough, albeit they afford infinite sport to the unbelievers. These travelling "professors," or many of them, are charlatans, thus far, that they pretend to treat, *scientifically*, phenomena, the real nature of which they are entirely ignorant of; and the study of which they are, neither by education, habit, or *aim*, at all fitted for. They are charlatans, in that their superficial knowledge of mere *effects* is simply made available in the shape of *exhibition*; and the success of the *show* being their first object, they may be suspected, perhaps, in some cases, of a little *management*. At the same time, the vulgar idea of general collusion, which prevails among those who *will* not themselves experiment, would be ridiculous if it were not pitiable.

De Bonneville had been electrifying Detroit by his more than *galvanic* effects upon the muscles of scores of his *impressibles*, when an enormous-sized Wolverine "trying the thing" himself, found that he was quite equal to the professor, in setting folks to sleep and "makin' on 'em cut up" afterwards, and, accordingly, in the *furore* of his discovery, off he went into the country to lecture and diffuse the new light which had been dispensed to him. His success was tremendous; town and village said there was "something in it," until his reputation, as in other cases, begat him enemies. The Wolverine Mesmerizer, after astonishing a "hall" full one evening, at some very "promising town" or other, and which bade fair shortly to be quite "a place," returned to the tavern, to be arrested in the bar-room by a score

of "first citizens," who had then and there congregated "jest to test the humbug," any how!

"Good evening, perfesser," said one. "Won't you take a little of the *fluid*?" said another; and this being an evident hit in the way of a *joke*, the "anti-humbugs" proceeded to more serious business.

"Perfesser," said the principal speaker, a giant of a fellow, —before whose proportions even the huge magnetiser looked small. "Perfesser," said he, "a few on us here hev jest concluded to hev you try an experiment, appintin' ourselves a reg'lar constituted committee to report!"

The professor begged to appoint a more proper place and hour, &c., or, according to the apprehensions of "the crowd," evinced the expected desire to make "a clean back out."

"Perfesser," resumed the "big dog," "ef we ondustand right, you call your Mesmer *ism* a 're-mee-jil agent,' which means, I s'pose, that it cures things?"

The disciple of science referred to divers cases about town in which he had been successful, to say nothing of the "pulling teeth" operation which he had just concluded his lecture with.

"Yes," said the challenger, "you're death on teeth we know, but ken Mesmerism come the re-mee-jil over rheumatiz?"

"Inflammatory or chronic?" demanded the professor.

"Wa'll, stranger, we ain't much given to doctor's bottle names, but we reckon it's about the wust kind."

The Mesmerist was about to define the difference between inflammatory attacks and *local* affections, when he was interrupted by the inquisitor, who *rather allowed* that as far as the *location* of the disorder went, it had a pre-emption right to the hull crittur; and that, furthermore, it was jest expected of him that he should forthwith visit the case, and bid him take up his bed and walk, or he himself would be escorted out of town, astride of a rail, with the accompanying ceremonies. This was a dilemma, either horn of which promised a toss to his reputation, but the crowd were solemnly in earnest; already triumphing in his *detection*, they began to look wolfish at him and wise at each other, so that the Wolverine had nothing left for it but to demand boldly to "see the patient!" We had better give the rest of the story as it was related to a humorous friend of ours by the disciple of Mesmer himself.

"Up stars I went with 'em, mad as thunder, I tell you; first at being thought a humbug, and next, that my individooal share of the American eagle should be compelled into a measure by thunder. I'd a gin them a fight, if it hadn't ben for the

science, which would a suffered anyhow, so I jest said to myself, let 'em bring on their rheumatiz! I felt as if I could a mesmerized a horse, and I *determined*, whatever the case might be, I'd make it squeal, by thunder!

"'Here he is,' said they, and in we all bundled into a room, gathering round a bed, with me shut in among 'em, and the cussed big onenlightened heathen that did the talking drawing out an almighty bowie-knife at the same time. 'That's your man!' said he. Well, there lay a miserable-looking critter, with his eyes sot and his mouth open,—and his jaws got wider and wider as he saw the crowd and the bowie-knife, I tell you! 'That's the idea!' said old big Ingin.

"'Rise up in that bed!' said I, and I tell you what, I must a looked at him dreadful, for up he jumped on eend, as if he'd jest got a streak of galvanic.

"'Git out on this floor,' said I, with a wuss look, and I wish I may be shot if out he didn't come, lookin' wild, I tell ye!

"'Now cut dirt drot you!' screamed I, and Jehu Ginerall Jackson!—if he didn't make a straight shirt-tail for the door, may I never make another pass. After him I went, and after me they cum, and *prehaps* there wasn't the orfullest stampede down three pair of stars that ever occurred in Michigan! Down cut old rheumatiz through the bar-room—out I cut after him—over went the stove in the rush after both on us. I chased him round two squars—in the snow at that—then headed him off, and chased him back to hotel agin, where he landed in a *fine sweat*, begged for his life, and said—he'd *give up the property*! Well, I wish I may be shot if he wasn't a feller that they were offerin' a reward for in Buffalo! I made him dress himself—cured of his rheumatiz—run it right out of him; delivered him up, pocketed the reward, and *established the science*, by thunder!"

LI.

MAN *versus* HORSE.

A FEW days ago a match was made for Mr G. B. to run two hundred yards, on a road that he should select, for a hundred dollars a side, against Mr J. H. W.'s grey mare; both man and beast were known to be pretty *fast*, particularly the

biped; however the owner of the quadruped was not *slow* in backing his mare to win, swearing she *could* and *would* beat anything living in this "mortal world."

The eventful day having arrived, early in the morning was met in Brooklyn Tom M., in charge of the mare on her way to Gowanus, where it was understood the match should come off, and a little later on were seen travelling, in the same direction, the biped and his friends, who were going to take all the gump-tion out of the gallant grey.

On arrival of the partisans of each party, the owner of the mare wished to settle the business instantler, saying he had to attend a dog fight, and wouldn't miss it "not for nothing,"—he therefore wished the biped to choose his ground, and let the match come off at once; this the biped assented to, and named for his ground the swamp leading from the turnpike to penny bridge. When this choice became known "there wasn't no row, I dare say," but there certainly was a small measure of cursing and swearing, and the owner of the grey mare swore "he'd be d——d if ever they cotched his mare in a swamp."

After a precious good muss, it was then arranged they should change the locality, and New Brighton, Staten Island, was fixed upon as a good place, and, as the day was pretty well advanced (and the dog fight sure to be over), the owner of the grey made no objection, and away all started for Richmond county.

On their arrival at these diggins, the biped was again urged to select his ground, and chose two hundred yards on the beach, where the stones and shingles were so numerous and large, that the mare would have been very fortunate in threading two hundred yards through them in a day or two. Another row took place, but the biped preserved, with wonder, his great equanimity of temper, and when remonstrated with on the nature of the ground he chose, he stated, very coolly, "he didn't make matches to lose them." But as they all seemed to think that the spirit of the wager was, that the match should be run on a turnpike road, and as he had no wish to disappoint "not nobody," he was willing to run it as they wished, and if they would follow him the road should be selected without delay. A loud hurrah followed this speech, and away the lot trudged in his wake.

Now the biped, being well acquainted with the geographical bearings of Staten Island, led them to a spot where a very desirable house stood, viz. a public-house, with a very accommodating landlord, and a fine old tree before the door.

"Gentlemen," says he, "we are now on the turnpike road—will this road satisfy you?"

"Yes, yes," cried a hundred voices.

"Well, then," says he (stripping off his superfluities), "here goes—here's my ground, and I don't go not nowhere else, if I do, I'm d——d."

Saying which, he took a line and measured twenty yards from the trunk of the tree, on each side, and says—

"Now, old fellow, mount your grey, and let's begin."

"Where's the ground?" says Tom M.

"Where's the ground?" says the biped, "why here, on a fair turnpike road. I'm a going to run your mare two hundred yards, just round this tree, and you don't find this child run on any other track."

Nuff said—the owner of the grey looked unutterables, and, with the mare and rider, made immediate tracks for the Empire City. Not so the biped—he and his friends, thankful for having "got out of the hole," stayed on the island a few days, on the spree, until they thought the choler of the owner of the quadruped would have time to evaporate.

LII.

SCENES IN ILLINOIS.

THIS State has a sort of heterogeneous population—a sort of pepper-and-salt mixture of all the races of mankind. The smoking, phlegmatic German, the Swede, the Norwegian, the beer-drinking Dutchman, the self-complacent John Bull, the canny Scot, the Israelite, the mercurial Frenchman, the frolicking Irishman, and the ever-present, ever-active Yankee, together with the Buckeye from Ohio, the Hoosier from Indiana, and the generous Southerner—all are here in about equal proportions, and give about their equal quota to the character of the State, and supply a choice variety of their peculiar expressions in its language. The Hoosier "allows," the Southerner "suspicions," the Buckeye "reckons," while the Yankee "calculates," and the Missourian "opinions." The State has yet no settled character—its different elements not having yet had time to harmonize and settle together. So its laws, its manners, and its languages.

The Yankee here is the same as the Yankee anywhere—only more so. More liberal, less saving, less religious, less honest, less careful of appearances—but quite as enterprising, and bound to get a living at his own or somebody's expense.

The Irishman is improved here—more intelligent, thrifty, and steady, and in every respect more of a man, and a better citizen, than he is elsewhere where I have seen him.

The Englishman gets good property here. He fares well, drinks his grog when he likes, and always alone, or with his own countrymen—keeps a pointer or setter, a double-barreled gun, and enjoys field sports when he pleases. A great many are scattered over the country, but do not readily assimilate with the people, and prefer brandy to corn whiskey—in which they show good taste.

The Scotchman here is always a good citizen, and a man of property, steady, thrifty, and law-abiding. The German and Jew do the fiddling and huckstering and gardening, wood-sawing, cooking, and a large part of the drinking. The only men I have seen drunk here were Germans, and yet they are good citizens. The Swedes and Norwegians are steady, hard-working fellows, and give nobody any trouble.

The Hoosier is a sort of cross between the Southerner and the bear, with all his qualities,—mental, moral, and physical,—just about equally divided between the two races, with a touch of the wandering Arab. He is a wandering animal, and his home and house are wherever his waggon happens to be, near some timber or fence for firewood, and where there is water enough for coffee; whiskey he takes raw, and washing is to him and his a work of supererogation.

The young Sucker, the rising generation of all these heterogeneous materials, is the devil just as nearly as he is anything, unlettered, ignorant, uncivilized, self-dependent, free, lawless, unpolished, resolute, careless, confident, tobacco-chewing, whiskey-drinking, suspicious of good clothes or good manners in others, and finally, to use his own expression, "don't care '*shucks*' for law, gospel, or the devil." One general characteristic of the animal is, that he is always anticipating that somebody will "feel big," which he considers his duty to resent before it happens.

The way the young Sucker volunteer fought in Mexico may give you some idea of his characteristics. He was there perfectly desperate in a fight. One of the officers related to me a little scene which occurred at Buena Vista, when the whole brunt of the Mexican advance was borne by an Illinois

regiment. It seemed as though they would be annihilated by superiority of numbers, and there were some signs of wavering, when a young Sucker drew his rifle deliberately and dropped a Mexican. "*Set up the pins!*" he shouted, and the whole regiment took up the word, and at every fire would shout—"Set up the pins!" The officer said they fought like demons, and with as much drollery and fun as if on a spree. At another time when a charge was ordered, one of the officers could not think of the word, and he shouted, "Let 'er rip!" when the whole line burst out with the yell, "Let 'er rip!" and dashed in among the Mexicans, laughing and shouting the new battle-cry. Of course there are many honourable exceptions, but the characteristics of the young Sucker are mainly as I have represented. The State itself is yet but little over "twenty years of age," and was settled all in a heap. Poverty piled in the settlers very unceremoniously, and they had to struggle with all sorts of hardships and difficulties, sickness, privations, bereavements, and even dangers. So the youth were conceived, nursed, and brought up in a mixture of all sorts of exigencies, which makes them what they are.

Many curious and most laughable scenes are of daily occurrence in the courts of justice; I will relate one which occurred in Khane county, in the circuit court, a few years ago, when Gov. Ford was the presiding judge, which will serve as a specimen.

An old miner and land contractor of considerable wealth, was summoned as one of the grand jury. He came to court gloriously drunk and rather late—in fact, not until the court was organized, and was engaged in trying a case. He came staggering in, dressed in buckskin, and making his way to the bar, addressed the court and people with "How are ye, darn ye?" at the top of his voice.

The judge put on a decorous frown, and said, "Mr Clerk, enter a fine of five dollars against Mr ——."

"Wal, judge, I guess you think this old hoss han't got the money, but you're mistaken, old feller."

Judge—"Mr Clerk, enter a fine of ten dollars."

"Wal, old feller, I can fork up." And he threw down the gold to pay the fine.

Judge—"Mr Clerk, enter a fine of twenty dollars."

"Wal, judge, here's the pewter, but if only we two are going to play this, put up your money if you do rake down the pile."

Judge—"Mr Clerk, enter a fine of fifty dollars."

"Hold on, judge, that's too big an ante. The old hoss's got the lead, but I won't play if you don't put down your stakes—I draw the bets."

By this time the judge was savage, while the crowd were vastly amused.

Judge—"Mr Sheriff, commit this man for contempt of court."

"Hold on, judge, *you're* too fast, or I be, and I guess it's me. I bid off the jail-yard, jail, and all, for the taxes, and I guess I own that are public institution, and you won't imprison a man in his own house, I reckon." This was said with a kind of drunken gravity that made it irresistibly ludicrous. The sheriff dragged him off, however, and the next day, when he was sober, he made a proper apology, and was forgiven. Equally ludicrous scenes have occurred among this free-and-easy people enough to fill a volume, but the class of men who were the actors are rapidly disappearing, and in all the towns of ten or twelve years' growth, there are now good lawyers, good public buildings, and respectable courts, though conducted with none of that imposing ceremony which you see in Canada, or even in New England.

LIII.

SKETCHES OF PINY WOODS CHARACTER.

READER, did you ever see a *raal* specimen of a piny-woods chap, who had travelled enough to give him confidence, and make him feel at ease upon a Turkey carpet? If not, just imagine the appearance of the present one as he stalks into the parlour of Col. Jones, whom he had called upon to sell a "right smart chunk of a critter beast." His bushy head of undefinable coloured hair was full six feet above his immense cowhide understandings, the lower half of the intermediate space being covered with a sort of home-grown and home-spun dirty-looking Georgia nankin-coloured fabric, not quite as coarse as the fellow's shirt, which he said was warped of grape vines, filled with oven-wood, and wove in a ladder. His coat was of the same sort, only a little more so, being ornamented with a stripe of red oak brown

and another of hickory bark yellow ; but the vest was "just the article of dry goods to take the rag off the bush ;" and then the cut and set of the whole suit was enough to give a tailor fits, and that was more than was ever given to the clothes.

The way he walked into the parlour was a caution to old folks ; taking a seat on a divan, he began diving his hands into the inmost recesses of the aforesaid yallar trowsers, because he did not know where else to put such useless appendages, which were in his way powerful. His hat he hung upon one of the arms of a branch candlestick on the mantel, and his whip he spread out upon the centre table.

The entrance of Miss Lizzie cost him a desperate effort at politeness ; but as the Col. would not be in for an hour, he had to fill up the time with conversation. Looking about him he discovered a piano, which he knew by sight as well as the boy did the letter A, but dog rot him if he could call the varmint by name. So he made bold to ax the gal if she ever fiddled songs on that long thing in the corner, cause he'd hearn old Sykes' gal make um go like thunder, that's a fact, Miss ; she's a raal screamer—enough to knock the hind sights right off a feller, what's got no old woman of his own.

Not liking to be out-done by old Sykes' gal, Miss Lizzie kindly consented to entertain the gentleman until her "dad" should return.

Piny yellow plush was mightily taken, but didn't think it quite equal to the music at his wedding. This announcement entirely knocked up all of Miss Lizzie's music, since it would be a vain effort to capture, although she might win her polite beau.

"Ah, how was that ? do tell me. I do like to hear about a wedding, and everything connected with it—do tell me ; if you will, I will try and sing you one of the sweetest songs in the world about a wedding, and here come my two sisters, who will be delighted to hear about yours, and what you had for supper, and all about it ; for I must tell you, one of them is thinking now about her own wedding."

After a succession of the politest crookings of the back, in honour of the new comers, and after a little more urging, he spread himself, and began to cut loose.

"Well, you see, gals, I and Jule—that's my old woman as is now—she was miserable good-looking then—had done a heap of courting off and on, but nobody thought we was as mighty nigh getting coupled, when old Missus Wade—that's Jule's mother like—made up a quiltin, one of the raal old fashun sort, you never seed the like on't I'll bet my pile.

"Well, old Missus Wade is jist the *oncontankerest* best hand to get up a quilting supper as ever trotted round a stump in them parts—but, Lord help you! she'd no idea me and Jule had any notion of splicing—that is, doubling teams you know—joining giblets—or what d'ye call it—that arternoon; but me and Jule had talked the thing over a powerful heap of times, and had just fixed things up just ready to take 'em all in a heap on the last quarter stretch. So she sorter put the old woman up to have the quilting, and the way she coaxed to go in for the feed would astonish any them sort of things now-a-days, I reckon.

Well, I went over t'other side of little muddy clear big creek, on the dry fork of Rapid Run, and told parson Roberts if he would come over and just make me and Jule one, I would give him two days' work next corn-shucking time; and he said he would if the water got down in dry fork, so he could get his critter over, case he had got a *ramfoozleification* in one of his dog-kickers, so he couldn't walk no way it could be fixed. Well, when I told the old hoss how Jule and the old woman had been poking in the sugar 'mong the flour, he 'lowed he'd come anyhow, if he had to go round the big swamp, and cross over Jones' Bridge by the new Zion Ebenezer meeting-house.

"So when the day came, the way the gals did shell out of them parts couldn't be beat, I tell you; and some of them were all-kill-fired smart to look at, mind I tell you.

"Well, when they all got a going it, I rode up sorter accidental like, and says I—

"Hello there, house!"

"Hello yourself, Jim Billings," says the old woman; "light, and come in—there's none but your friends here, I reckon."

"Why, what on airth," says I, "is the doings here?"

Never letting on as though I knowed the first thing about the gathering; and then the gals they all jined in, and 'lowed I mought as well hang my critter to a swinging limb, and come and string needles for 'em till the rest of the fellers come anyhow; and so I pretended as though I didn't think of coming at all, only as I was going by on my way down to Smalley's store to see what would be the chance of getting some seed taters up from Augusta next week, and seeing a right smart gathering there, I thought I'd just see what they were all up to; but I couldn't think of stepping in, for I wan't fixed for't no how. But arter a while I concluded I might see some of the fellers up from about Smalley's, coming to the dance the gals said they were going to have, arter the quilt was out, and so I could find

what the chance was for taters, maybe as how ; so I concluded I'd stop, if they'd say nothing about my having my every-day dry goods on.

"So I tied my critter out, and came in, and the way I did string them needles and talk pritty, is one of the most onaccountablest hug-um-easy spreadifications I ever made—I jist crooked my eye over to Jule not to notice my crankums, and she took the hint, and led off the beautifulest of anything I ever seed.

"Well, about the time we'd rolled the thing for the last puff, somebody else sung out down by the bars—

"'Who keeps house?'

"I knowed right straight it was parson Roberts, and I sorter looked over to Jule, on the sly, as to say—my filly, I'll be hugging you powerfully 'fore long, or I ain't Jim Billings no way you can fix it!

"And when the gals seed who it was, I said mighty innocent like—'I'll bet a peck of goubers, ready roasted, that the old parson is going over to see Aunt Sally Wilden's old man, for he is mighty nigh going off with one of them old turns that come nigh upon't upsetting his apple-cart last spring.' So says I—

"'Parson, you're on your way to see old man Wilden, ha? Well, light, parson, and come in a while, and I'll go over with you.'

"'Oh, yes! do get him in,' says all the gals, 'and we'll get up a ceremony.'

"'I'll act the feller, and marry any gal what'll have me,' says Mehitable Ann Eliza Jones Bailly.'

"'So will I!' says I.

"'I should like to see you try it!' says about six of 'em at once.

"'Well, I reckon you would,' thinks I; 'but there's only one gal in this crowd will git that offer.'

"Well, the parson he tied his critter and come in, and almost the first thing he ax'd Marm Wade, was, if she had a pack of keerds—'cause, you must know, he was jist one of the powerfulllest preachers in Georgia, and he could jist beat anything that ever wore a shirt at Yuker, and he knowed I could take a hand 'bout equal to the next feller.

"Arter a while the fellers began to gather, and 'fore long the gals finished the quilt, and such a shaking, and pulling, and bowling, as you never seed nohow, I reckon; and 'old Marm Wade declared if any of them gals, seeing parson Roberts was there, and all ready, would get married, she would give 'em that

quilt, sure as grease. So at that I gin Jule a wink, and she slipt out and got in the smoke-house, to put on her calico fixins, and I tuk my saddle-bags and made for the fodder-stacks, to git my Sunday rig on. And I tell you what 'tis, Miss, I reckon you never seed a couple of chaps look much slicker than me and Jule by moonlight. So I tuk Jule by the hand, and walked right in among all the gals and fellers, just as they'd began to wonder what on yearth had become of Jim and Jule, and I tell you she did look mighty sweet, that's a fact, and they all seed right off that something was going to happen, case we was fixed up slick, that ar a fact. So says I—

“ ‘Marm Wade, I should just like to have that quilt for mine and Jule's, if you are willing.’ ”

“ At that, I never seed anybody in my life so mightily knocked up all of a heap, since I know'd myself. She know'd something was come'round, for I was dressed up rather more than when I first stopt in, and Jule had on her best, I tell you, with a string of blue diamond beeds on her neck that shined like stars; and she'd got shoes and stockings on, and that the old woman know'd well 'nuff she wouldn't do at home, 'cept on some extra 'casion, and so says she, arter looking at us about a minute, good, says she—

“ ‘Jim Billings, are you in downright yearnest? and do you want to marry my Jule for keeps? cause if you do, you must jist do it right now; but if you're going to fool her, you'd better make your will 'fore you go out of this house.’ ”

“ Me and Jule both answered at once, that we'd just made it up to have the quilting to get the gals and fellers there, without letting on anything about the wedding, and we was in right-down yearnest about it.

“ ‘Now,’ says I, ‘parson, cut loose, and let us have it over.’ ”

“ He went at it like a day's work, and, Lord bless you, it didn't take him no time hardly to make old folks on us; and then such a hugging and kissing, and pulling and howling, and jawing, you never seed, for you see they all liked Jule mightily.

“ Soon as they'd got sorter over this heat, the old woman told them they mought as well trot themselves into t'other room, and get a feed. Well, I never did eat in any of the big houses—'cause when we goes down to Augusta, we always carries grub along with us—but I should like to know if they ever have any better feed than that was.”

“ Oh, do tell us what you had, and how it was made. I

assure you, I have no doubt it was at least equal to any other in anybody's house, big or little. Pray describe it."

"Well, you see, Miss, the old lady had spread herself to have a heap of good things. First there was a biled pig, stuffed with taters, and it was so tender you could just eat it without a knife, just as easy as falling off a log. And there was a sight of fried chickens, and gravy enough to eat with a spoon, and just as much bacon and greens as anybody could put under their belts; and there was tater-coffee and store-coffee—you could have as much as you could pour into your funnel. But the pies and cakes, they was all killing nice, I tell you; they had some cake they called plum-cake, though 'twant plums, but it was full of black-looking sweet things they tried to make me believe was raisins; but 'twant equal to the real huckleberry cake. And they had tater pies and peach pies; I reckon you'd jist like to know how to make 'em?"

"Certainly; do tell us—I am very fond of good pies."

"So am I, and Jule can beat the nation making them sort. Now, to make tater pies, you stretch a piece of dough 'cross a plate, and then smear biled tater over it, with some milk and sugar, and it can't be beat. And peach pie, you take a piece of dough and stretch across a plate, and pour some biled peaches in it, and then you stretch another piece of dough over it, for a kiver; and when it's baked you can't tell what it's made on, 'less you peck a hole in it; and that's the way we had to do that night, 'cause there wore lots of all sorts of pies, with kivers to 'em. I reckon every gal and feller there eat nigh upon as much that night as they knew how to put under their dry goods; and arter supper, the way they did dance, was enough to make the fur fly in a tall coon-hunt. Jule she tried a while with her stompers on, but she couldn't stand it, case every now and then she'd tread on some feller's toes, and then he'd cuss, and so she down on one knee, and then t'other, and had 'em off in less than no time, while she and her feller was waitin' for a chance to cut in, and so t'other gals, seeing how she did, they all come down on their marrow-bones, as they come round, and when they had all got rid of their shoes and stockings, the way they put in the double licks, beat anything I ever saw afore in Georgia. And would you believe it, Miss, there was only three gallons of licker drank there that night; but mind I tell you, there was a right sweet chance of courting done 'fore morning, and I do 'spect Bill Fisher would have tied up to his gal that night, but when he got her in the notion, come to look round, d——n me if old parson Roberts—the old fox

—hadn't cut out and gone, clear as mud ; and 'fore next week, what do you think she done ? why, she just nater'ly turned in and died ; she did, as true as my name is Jim Billings, and Bill he jist took to drink, and ain't been worth a dog's runnet ever since."

LIV.

OLD BLAND, THE PIONEER.

IN wandering through the woods where solitude seems to hold undivided reign, so that one learns to fancy companionable qualities in the flowers, and decided sympathetic intelligence in the bright-eyed squirrel, it is not uncommon to find originals odd enough to make the fortune of a human menagerie, such as will doubtless form, at no distant day, a new resource for the curious. If any of the experimental philosophers of the day should undertake a collection of this nature, I recommend the woods of the west as a hopeful field for the search. Odd people are odder in the country than in town, because there is nothing like collision to smooth down their salient points, and because solitude is the nurse of reverie, which is well known to be the originator of many an erratic freak. There is a foster relationship at least between solitude and oddity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the free and easy new country. A fair specimen used to thrive in a certain green wood not a thousand miles from this spot ; a veteran who bore in his furrowed front the traces of many a year of hardship and exposure, and whose eyes retained but little of the twinkling light which must have distinguished them in early life, but which had become submerged in at least a twilight darkness which scarce allowed him to distinguish the light of a candle. His limbs were withered and almost useless, his voice shrunk to a piping treble, and his trembling hands but imperfectly performed their favourite office of carrying a tumbler to his lips. His tongue alone escaped the general decay, and in this one organ were concentrated (as it is with the touch in cases of blindness) the potency of all the rest. If we may trust his own account, his adventures had been only less varied and wonderful than those of Sinbad or Baron Munchausen. But we used sometimes to

think distance may be the source of deception in matters of time as well as of space, and so made due allowance for faulty perspective in his reminiscences.

His house was as different from all other houses as he himself was from all other men. It was shaped somewhat like a beehive; and, instead of ordinary walls, the shingles continued in uninterrupted courses from the peak to the ground. At one side was a stick chimney, and this was finished on the top by the remnant of a stone churn; whether put there to perform the legitimate office of a chimney-pot, or merely as an architectural ornament, I cannot say. It had an *unique* air at any rate when one first espied it after miles of solitary riding, where no tree had fallen except those which were removed in making the road. A luxuriant hop-vine crept up the shingles until it wound itself around this same broken churn, and then, seeking further support, the long ends still stretched out in every direction, so numerous and so lithe, that every passing breeze made them whirl like green-robed fairies dancing hornpipes about the chimney in preparation for a descent upon the inhabitants below.

At the side opposite the chimney was a sort of staircase, scarcely more than a ladder, leading to the upper chamber, carried up outside through lack of room in the little cottage; and this airy flight was the visible sign of a change which took place in the old man's establishment towards the latter part of his life. A grand-daughter, the orphan of his only son, had come to him in utter destitution, and this made it necessary to have a second apartment in the shingled hive; so the stairs were built outside as we have said, and Julia Brand was installed in the wee chamber to which it led. She was a girl of twelve, perhaps, at this time, and soon became all in all to her aged relative. But we will put her off for the present, that we may recall at more length our recollections of old Richard Brand. The race of rough old pioneers to which he belonged was fast passing away, and emigration and improvement are sweeping from the face of the land every trace of their existence. The spirit by which they were animated has no fellowship with steamboats and railroads; their pleasures were not increased but diminished by the rapid accession of population, for whom they had done much to prepare the way. The younger and hardier of their number felt themselves elbowed, and so pressed onward to the boundless prairies of the far west; the old shrunk from contact with society, and gathered themselves as if to await the mighty hunter in characteristic fashion. Old Brand

belonged to the latter class. He looked ninety; but much allowance must be made for winter storms and night-watches, and such irregularities and exposure as are sure to keep an account against man, and to score their demands upon his body both within and without.

We have said that the house had a wild and strange look, and the aspect of the tenant of the little nest was that of an old wizard. He would sit by the side of the door enjoying the sunshine, and making marks on the sand with the long staff which seldom quitted his feeble hands, while his favourite cat purred at his feet, or perched herself on his shoulder, rubbing herself against his grey locks unreprieved. Weird and sad was his silent aspect; but once set him talking, or place in his hands his battered violin, and you would no longer find *silence* tiresome. One string was generally all that the instrument could boast; but that one, like the tongue of the owner, performed more than its share. It could say,

Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe, tip-toe,
Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe fine;
Can't get a husband to please her, please her,
Can't get a husband to please her mind!

as plain as any human lips and teeth could make the same taunting observation; but if you ventured to compare the old magician to Paganini, "Humph!" he would say, with a toss of his little grey head, "ninny I may be, but pagan I a'n't, any how; for do I eat little babies, and drink nothing but water?"

Nobody ever ventured to give an affirmative answer to either branch of this question; so the old man triumphed in the refutation of the slander.

Directly in front of the door by which old Brand usually sat was a pit, four or five feet deep perhaps, and two feet in diameter at the top, and still wider at the bottom, where it was strewn with broken bottles and jugs. (Mr Brand had, by some accident, good store of these.) This pit was generally covered during the day, but for many years the platform was at night drawn within the door, with all the circumspection that attended the raising of a drawbridge before a castle gate in ancient times.

"Is that a wolf-trap?" inquired an uninitiated guest. An explosion of laughter met this truly *green* question.

"A wolf-trap! O! massy! what a wolf-hunter you be! You bought that 'ere fine broadcloth coat out of bounty money, didn't ye? How I should laugh to see ye where our Jake was once, when he war'n't more than twelve year old! You'd

grin till a wolf would be a fool to ye! I had a real wolf-trap then, *I* tell ye! There had been a wolf around, that was the hungriest critter you ever heard tell on. Nobody pretended to keep a sheep, and as for little pigs they war'n't a circumstance. He'd eat a litter in one night. Well! I dug my trap plenty deep enough, and all the dirt I took out on't was laid up o' one side, slantindicler, up-hill like, so as to make the jump a pretty good one; and then the other sides was built up close with logs. It was a sneezer of a trap. So there I baited and baited, and watched and waited; but pigs was plenty where they was easier come at, and no wolf came. By-and-by our old yellow mare died, and what does I do but goes and whops th' old mare into the trap. 'There!' says I to Jake, says I, 'that would catch th' old Nick; let's see what the old wolf 'll say to it. So the next night we watch'd, and it war'n't hardly midnight when the wolf come along to go to the hog-pen. He scented old Poll quick enough; and I tell ye! the way he went into the trap war'n't slow. It was jist as a young feller falls in love, head over heels. Well! now the question was how we should kill the villain; and while we was a consultin' about that, and one old hunter proposin' one thing and another another, our Jake says to me, says he, 'Father,' says he, 'I've got a plan in my head that I know'll do! I'll bang him over the head with this knotty stick.' And before you could say Jack Robinson, in that tarnal critter jump'd and went at him. It was a tough battle *I* tell ye! The wolf grinned; but Jake he never stopped to grin, but put it on to him as cool as a cucumber, till he got so he could see his brains, and then he was satisfied. 'Now pull me out!' says little Jake, says he, 'And I tell ye what! if it a'n't daylight I want my breakfast!' And Jake was a show, any how! What with his own scratches and the spatters of the wolf's blood, he look'd as if the Indians had scalped him all over."

"But what is *this* hole for?" persisted the visitor, who found himself as far from the point as ever.

"Did you ever see a Indian?" said the wizard.

"No! oh yes; I saw Black Hawk and his party, at Washington——"

"Black Hawk! ho, ho, ho! and Tommy Hawk too, I s'pose! Indians dress'd off to fool the big bugs up there! But *I* mean *real* Indians—Indians at home in the woods—devils that's as thirsty for white men's blood as painters!* Why, when I

* Panthers.

come first into the *Michigan*, they were as thick as huckleberries. We didn't mind shooting 'em any more than if they'd had four legs. That's a foolish law that won't let a man kill an Indian. Some people pretend to think the niggers haven't got souls, but for my part I *know* they have; as for Indians, it's all nonsense! I was brought up right in with the blacks. My father own'd a real raft on 'em, and they was as human as anybody. When my father died, and everything he had in the world wouldn't half pay his debts, our old Momma Venus took mother home to her cabin, and done for her as long as she lived. Not but what we boys helped her as much we could, but we had nothing to begin with, and never had no larnin'. I was the oldest, and father died when I was twelve years old, and he hadn't begun to think about gettin' a schoolmaster on the plantation. I used to be in with our niggers, that is, them that used to be ours; and though I'd lick'd 'em and kick'd 'em many a time, they was jist as good to me as if I'd been their own colour. But I wanted to get some larnin', so I used to lie on the floor of their cabins, with my head to the fire, and so study a spellin'-book some Yankees had gi'n me by the light of the pine knots and hickory bark. The Yankee people was good friends to me too, and when I got old enough some on 'em sent me down to New Orleans with a flat loaded with flour and bacon.

"Now in them days there was no goin' up and down the Mississippi in comfort, upon 'count of the Spaniards. The very first village I came to, they hailed me and asked for my pass. I told 'em the niggers carried passes, but that I was a free-born American and didn't need a pass to go anywhere upon airth. So I took no further notice of the whiskerandoes till jist as I turn'd the next pint, what should I see but a mud fort and a passel of sojers gettin' ready to fire into me. This looked squally, and I come to. They soon boarded me, and had my boat tied to a tree and my hands behind my back before you could whistle. I told the boy that was with me to stick by and see that nothing happened to the cargo, and off I went to prison; nothing but a log-prison, but strong as thunder, and only a trap-door in the roof. So there I was in limbo tucked up pretty nice. They gi'n me nothing to eat but stale corn bread and pork rinds; not even a pickle to make it go down. I think the days was squeez'd out longer in that black hole than ever they was in Greenland. But there's an end to most everything, and so there was to that. As good luck would have it, the whiskerando governor came along down the river and

landed at the village, and hearin' of the Yankee (they call'd me a Yankee 'cause I was clear white), hearin' that there was a Yankee in the man-trap, he order'd me before him. There he jabber'd away, and I jabber'd as fast as he did; but he was a gentleman, and gentlemen is like freemasons, they can understand each other all over the world. So the governor let me go, and then he and the dons that were with him walk'd down with me to my craft, and gave me to understand they wanted to buy some o' my fixins. So I roll'd 'em out a barrel of flour, and flung up a passel of bacon, till they made signs there was enough, and then the governor he pull'd out his gold-netted purse to pay me. I laughed at him for thinkin' I would take pay from one that had used me so well; and when he laid the money upon a box slily, I tied it up in an old rag and chucked it ashore to him after I pushed off; so he smil'd and nodded to me, and Peleg and I we took off our hats and gi'n him a rousin' hurrah, and I thought that was the last I should see on him. But lo and behold! when I got to New Orleans, there was my gentleman got there before me, and remitted all government costs and charges, and found buyers for my perduce and my craft, and like to have bought me too. But I lik'd the bush, so I took my gun and set off afoot through the wilderness, and found my way home again with my money all safe. When I come to settle with the Yankees there was a good slice for me and mother, so I come off to buy a tract in the *Michigan*. I come streakin' along till I got to the Huron river, and undertook to swim that with my clothes on and my money tied round my neck. The stream was so high that I come pretty near givin' up. It was 'pull devil, pull baker,' with me, and I was glad to ontie my money and let it go. That was before these blessed banks eased a fellow of his money so slick and you had to carry hard cash. So mine went to the bottom, and it's there yet for what I know. I went to work choppin' till I got enough to buy me an eighty; and I bought and sold fourteen times before I could get a farm to suit me, and like enough may try again before I die."

"But you were going to tell me about this hole."

"Oh, the hole! yes—that 'ere hole! You see when I first settled, and the Indians was as thick as snakes, so that I used to sleep with my head in an iron pot for fear they should shoot me through the logs, I dug that hole and fix'd it just right for 'em in case they came prowlin' about in the night. I laid a teterin' board over it, so that if you stepped on it down you went; and there was a stout string stretch'd acrost it and tied to the lock of my rifle, and the rifle was pointed through a hole

in the door, so whoever fell into the hole let off the rifle and stood a good chance for a sugar-plum. I sot it so for years and never caught an Indian, they're so cunning; and after they'd all pretty much left these parts I used to set it from habit. But at last I got tired of it and put up my rifle at night though I still sot my trap; and the very first night after I left off puttin' the rifle through the hole who should come along but my own brother from old Kentuck, that I hadn't seen for twenty year! He went into the hole about the slickest, but it only tore his trowsers a little, and wasn't I glad I hadn't sot the rifle?"

LV.

WESTERN TRAVEL.

IF at any time you envied me, setting forth upon my flowery path, you had better reverse the engine and go back some distance upon the track. Not but that Philadelphia was the same dear old city; not but that Baltimore and the Eutaw-house had the same friendly aspect (I pass over the *road* to Baltimore); not but that I found the road, through Maryland and Virginia to Cumberland, fine enough in stupendous mountain scenery and beautiful Potomac-lapses of water, and all that; but those Alleghanies!—those heartless, stony, chasmy Alleghanies, that reminded me (painfully) of my school-boy days, and "Old Grey Whack," as we used to call our now lamented teacher! Even now, I can scarcely look upon a hard-bottomed chair without some feelings of envy. One little fellow, who was on the back-seat with myself, after some two hundred and forty bumps, gave it up, and for the rest of the night hung over the strap that is back of the middle-seat. The scenery of the Alleghanies, at night, possesses a freshness and wild Dantesque vigour that are perfectly stunning. You see nothing but the occasional lantern of a benighted teamster; but you are reminded by some one of the passengers, every few minutes, of the wonderful freaks of nature around you.

"Here's a place where a stage went over a few years ago; down that place—it's so black you can't see, but if the driver sheers his horses that way six inches, down *we* go; and it's only two hundred feet to the bottom—that's all!" (bump).

"Were they killed?"

"Killed! well, I should rather (bump) think so."

"There, now's another place just like it on (bump) t'other side. A teamster walked off there this day fortnight; fell on his back across a sharp rock, and broke right in two. When they (bump) picked him up, they pulled out about tew feet of his spiral-marrer."

Little fellow on the strap—"Oh, Christmas!"

"D'ye hear about the stage being robbed?"

"No! When?"

"'Bout six weeks ago; the trunks were all cut loose from the back, and when the passengers got to Union, I'll be go-blamed if they had any baggage!"

"Pleasant night, sir!"

"Well, I should think it was a lee-tle inclined to rain."

So we got to B——. At this place we found a couple waiting to be married in the hotel, with groomsman and bridesmaid. The bride, tall, ruddy-lipped, black-eyed, and altogether a very pretty young woman: the groom, a little diminutive "broth of a boy," about twice her age. After the ceremony, I came into the room with a cigar in my mouth (as is customary), and said—

"Perhaps you don't——"

"Oh, yes, I like the smoke, and like to smoke 'em too." The bride said this.

"Will you allow me to offer you one?"

"Hey?"

"Will you have a cigar yourself?"

"Yes, thank ye."

"Will you?" (to the bridesmaid).

"No, I'll wait till she gets along some, and then I'll take a pull at her'n."

We leave B—— next morning (my friend D—— and I), and here we take a temporary leave of each other. There are two stages nearly full; one has an inside and one an outside seat; so D—— takes the latter, and I climb into the back-seat of a stage, and am fitted into the side of an old woman with a band-box on her knee, and a great Kentuckian fits himself into my side. Having a middle-seat I take advantage of my situation, and make an arm-chair of it, by resting my elbows on the old lady's band box and the Kentuckian's arm; then I open "David Copperfield" on the back of the gentleman in front and we go along "like bricks." So we ride a few hours.

"Capt'n," says the Kentuckian (he always calls me Capt'n),

"will you allow me to put my legs in yours? I got a pain in my side ridin' all night."

"Oh, certainly."

"Consequence is," I am jammed so tight that I begin to think wedges will be called before I ever get my knees apart again. Then I commiserate those unfortunate Venetian captives who see the walls of their prison gradually closing upon them; then I think of poor people crushed under a falling building; then I begin to have the cramp in both legs; it gets to be intolerable; at last I wake up my companion.

"Kentuck, you *must* move a little."

"Certain, Capt'n."

The room so afforded gives me little relief; at last I hear the cheery voice of D——, from the top of the other coach—

"Come up here; plenty of room!"

And so I escaped from my purgatory. We rattle down merrily to Wheeling, and here we take supper.

* * * From the time I left Cincinnati until I reached Memphis, I heard of three explosions, one fire, and one sinking. Then we had the small-pox on board, and lay beside the "H——" at the wharf, on board of which there had been four deaths from cholera. I went to a trial in Memphis of a slave, who had killed three men with the thigh-bone of an ox in three single blows; and there was a fellow there, with the marks of a pistol-bullet in his cheek, disposed to be drunk and quarrelsome, who kept talking to me. Also the porter told me to lock my door at night, as there had been some robberies in town, and they suspected, in fact, almost knew, it was the man in number fourteen—my room being number fifteen—my *vis-à-vis*, by Jove! The porter had a pistol, with the butt just peeping out of his side-coat-pocket. *That* indicated the character of the land in which I happened to be. On board this boat there are two very ugly customers: one is, a fellow on crutches, always drunk; and he has a paper on his hat with "fifteen hundred dollars reward" for a man who killed his uncle three weeks since. There is an old Col. C—— here, who was severely cut all over his face, a few years ago, by a gambler, in defending a young man from being pillaged; and, altogether, it is very romantic and pleasing! Beloved land of the pistol and bowie-knife!—what has been said of thee is not fiction! I do not take hear-say, but have the visible evidence all around!

LVI.

MIKE HOOTER'S FIGHT WITH THE PANTHER. :

A YAZOO SKETCH.

"TALKIN' of panthers," said Mike, "an' the seviegerous dispersition o' the varmint, the critter what camps out down in my deadnin' ain't to be beat no whar north nor south o' Satartia. You hosses in this here village makes er great hell-er-bellow 'bout seein' the elephant an' fightin' the tiger, an' all that kind er small suckumstance; but wait 'tell you've seen the sights what brother Hooter's seen, an' fout sich panter fights like this child has, an' my privit 'pinion is you'll stop braggin' right plum."

"You must know," continued our narrator, "you must know this child ain't skeer'd o' nothin' this side o' no whar 'cept it's doin' er mean trick, an' when it comes to that I caves in. But when you talks 'bout er bar fight or er leetle small fuss with er panter, an' all that kind er privit 'musement, I'm *thar*! They say Dave Brazeal's up to deer huntin', an' Sam Dougherty's purty fast arter a fox—but that's er small, slim bizzness—an' when they've cotch the varmint, all they gits is er piece uv his coat-tail an' some har. But bar an' panter shootin's worth a feller's while, an' *thar* this child's perfectly in town. Ole Ike Hamberlin use to be some in that line, an' so was Parson James; but, when I squat down in our clearin', Ike begun steam-docterin' fur er livin', an' brother James he tuk to preachin'. You never hearn none er that James' sermons, didn't you? Well, if you never did, jest go down to Claibornesville to camp meeting next time that hoss-fly spouts, an'—*sich* preachin'! whew! an'—*sich* hollerin'! Parson James could take the lint off all for *loud*, any day! An' when he cum to slappin' his hans an' stompin' his feet, an' foammin' at the gills—jest to see the shines uv them mourners! *Sich* shoutin' an' *sich* er 'nuther hollerin' an' screamin' 'mongst the wimmin! an' *sich* tarnation cuttin' up, an' wollerin' an' rollin' 'bout in the straw an' shucks, you never hearn tell uv since you was kittened!

"Howsever, that ain't tellin' 'bout the panter; an', somehow or 'nuther, when I gits to talkin' uv my huntin' scrapes,

Ike Hamberlin, an' sich like fellers, always pops into my noddle; an', 'stead uv tellin' the story, I flies off'n the track, an' commences talkin' 'bout my neighbours. Speakin' uv Ike, an' the way he use to steam-doctor them yaller chaps in the hills, 'minds me uv er tale Dr Turnipseed use to tell on him 'bout how he got to be er doctor.

"You see Ike was 'rigionally er gunsmith, an' from tinkerin' 'bout guns he got to shootin' um—fust at his neighbour's cows an' the like, and from that he tuk to huntin' reg'lar. Howsomever that aint the pinte. But one night he cotch cold from sleepin' with his mouth open, an' er steam-doctor 'vised him to take some 'NUMBER SIX.' Well, Ike swaller'd er whoppin' dose uv it, an' thar was whiskey in it, an' he kep er takin' it when he hadn't ought to, 'tell he got so much uv it in him that he cum precious nigh peggin' out—an' arter that he tuk sich er pertickler liken' to the med'cine—(though I always 'spected it was the whiskey that was in it)—that he cotch er fresh cold ev'ry day. To save expenses he thought he'd go to steam-docterin' hisself, so he mout have the med'cine handy in case uv axedint. So Ike he quit gunsmithin', and borrid er spellin' book from one uv ole Dave Le May's niggers, an' went to readin'; an' from that he got him er 'Thompsonian doctor book,' an' went to cipherin' out how to practise physic. In about er week he thought he know'd 'nuff, an' went an' got him er jug er ball-face whiskey, an' some red pepper, an' dogwood bark, an' snake root, an' Injun turnip, an' jimston weed, an' what all; an' jumbled um all up in er mixtry together—an' that was Ike's 'NUMBER SIX.' Soon as his med'cine had time to soak some, Ike went to docterin' fur er bizzness, an' then he got too big for his breeches, an' kinder tuk the swell head, an' got to shavin' an' puttin' on er clean shirt ev'ry eight or ten days. 'Twasn't long 'fore he quit goin' to pra'r meetins, an' brother Marly said he b'lieve he hearn him one day cussin' his ole hoss for stumblin'.

"Well, the fust case Ike had to doctor was er feller down in Satartia, what cotch the bumfujjins from swallerin' too much tadpole soup. The fust dose Ike gin him, he walloped over on his belly, an' trimbled all over, jest like er free nigger on er frosty mornin', or er dyin' calf knocked in the head with er milk piggin. When Ike saw that, he know'd he'd made er impression on him, an' that his med'cine was the very *thing!* Torectly the chap begin puffin' an' blowin' like er green lizzard on er hot fence rail, an' his mouth it flew open like er rat-trap when it's sot.

I seed it was all day with him, and, sez I, "Good-bye, cow!"

"The chap died.

"Ike said it sarved him right, 'cause he didn't obey orders.

"The next ailment he went to doctor was er ole coon, what kep grocery in Satartia, an' swapped whiskey to niggers for chickens they'd stole. That ole studd tuk cold an' pleurisy from goin' in er swimmin' an' putin' on a clean shirt torecly arterwards. His skin was dry as er bone, an' all shriveled up like er cotton blossom arter er frost, an' his hands was as hot as er roasted tater. He axed for water, Ike said 'twasn't no use humourin' sick folks, for he'd want some agin, an' then he gin him er spoonful er "Number Six."

"The next thing Ike did was to souze him head an' ears right plum kerswash into er tub uv bilein' hot water. You oughter seen that chap when he felt the steam of it, how he wriggled 'bout an' play'd kerwollop in that tub! He put me in mind of er leather shoe-string in the hot ashes—but he soon cooled down as quiet as er nigger with er ague on him doubled up on er pile o' hot cotton seeds.

"He's all right, sez Ike. Didn't I fix him in double quick time?

"Then you orter seen Ike swell at the gills an' strut 'bout like er turkey gobbler in layin' time; jest as if somebody'd gin him er new wolf-skin to make him er Sunday coat.

"Wan't that quick? said Ike. Doctor Rice be durned! he ain't no doctor side er me! Stan him up! sez Ike. But the feller was as limber as my shirt tail. He was dead!

Well, the way Ike got round that was, he told the people that the 'tarnal cuss was dyin' when he got to him,—and was he any witch to raise the dead? When er feller's done flummuxed, he's flummuxed, said Ike, an' salt won't save him; an' what's the use of blowin' in er bellows what's got er hole in it?

"But all that ain't neither here nor thar,—continued Mike. Let me tell you 'bout the panter. I've read in newspapers 'bout some monsos cantankerous varmunts,—sich as the Bengal tiger what swollers er whole elephant an' is hungry yet,—an' the hyena that laughs when he's mad, an' uv the Mexico lion what's always mad when the white of his eye's black, an' that's always black; but they ain't er suckumstance—for the big, yaller-harr'd, red-eyed panter what uses down in my neck o' woods licks um into fits.

"Why, if you'd seen that ar customer what I fout with long time ago, when my Sal was er leetle bit uv er runt uv er thing

'bout knee high to er three-legged stool, you'd er gin in kerslap, Of all the rambunctious critters that ever you spy, he tuk the rag off'n the bush! Why, if that feller Elliot Brazeal had er bin thar with them ar *stilts* uv his'n, what calls *legs*, if he hadn't er run, *pre-haps* thar'd er bin some uv the *tallest* walkin! *Jewilikin!* warn't he some? He was one uv the panter's what you read about; an' if ole Jethro Clark er had er hand in that fight, an' no saplin close by for him to climb on-to, ef that panter hadn't er skeer'd the yaller out'n his keountenance, then Mike Hooter never shouted amen at er camp-meetin'—*he* didn't!

"But that aint tellin' you 'bout the fight," again observed our narrator. "You see," he continued, "it was summer time, an' the crap was laid by, an' we had nothin' to do but to do nothin' an' hunt varmunts. 'Sides, you see the varmunts was mighty fat, and my wife she wanted some bar's ile to slick the little niggers' faces with, to make um shine an' look purty as 'twant no use washin' um—for water made um look kinder like they'd bin in the ashes. 'Sides I was arter bar I was, an' warn't thinkin' ov er panter. So I holler'd up the dogs, an' told John Potter, if he wanted to, to come erlong *his-self*. Arter we'd tuk a privit drink o' rale '*red-eye*,' we *put*, an' torectly the dogs they begin er barkin', an' a gwine it through the cane like flujins! 'Talk to him, honey,' sez I! An' they did talk to him, *they* did! Sich music! It beat 'Ole Rosin the Bow,' an' 'Sally in the Gardin', all hollow. I thought my Sal was some for music, an' if you could hear her singin' 'Little pigs they lay in the hay all night,' an' me er pattin' 'Jubah,' I guess you'd knock under.

"Well, away the dogs went, waitin' on him close an' talkin' to him like er brother. Torecly they changed ther tune an' gin to sing out like they'd cotch up with him, and when I got thar I see the varmint had done tree'd in er sink hole. I know'd it warn't a bar, for thar was panter tracks, an' the whoppinest big foot ever you see. Well, I got down on my all-fours an' gin to spy into the hole, and the fust thing I diskiver was two uv the allfiredrst, biggest eyes, that glar'd like er coal o' fire, an' torectly I hearn him growl! Whew! I warn't no more skeer'd than nothin', but the way I let drive into that hole with both barrels uv my ole gun, an' the way she lumber'd, was a caution, I tell *you!* The fust thing I know'd I didn't know nuthin', an' when I cum to myself thar was I settin' up in the fork uv er tree, an' my gun empty an' it down in the sink hole, an' the panter out 'mongst the dogs, goin' it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, an' fust t'other an' then one, an' a

lickin' um up like salt! I *was* mad I tell *you*! 'Twouldn't er done for chaps to run up agin me then—I'd er chawed um up worse nor er calf can chaw er hosses tail,—I would.

"Well, you see," he continued, "it was the orfulest place for er panter fight that ever you see,—canes an' briers, an' the cussedest thicket. It was down back uv ole Jonathan Bonny's cane field. You know'd ole Jonathan Bonny? Thar was er feller lived down in the valley—(looked somethin' like you)—use to call him Bonathan Johnny, *for short*, an' sometimes he'd holler at him an' call him 'Old Spot,' jest to hear him swar—for Jonathan had er monsos curisome keountenance,—all freckled like er turkey egg—jest like natur had painted him sorter cream colour an' got mad for doin' sich er ondifferent job, an' then whopped er whole han' full o' saw dust kerbim into his face, an' dotted him all over. He was er pictur,—*he* was. I tell *you*, ef he warn't the ugliest coon that ever clum er tree, you can take *my* ole cap—an' for turnin' milk sour, that face o' hisen could beat thunder! He had no more use for er lookin'-glass to see his purty in nor er billy goat has for collogne water. He had er wife, too, that was er few."

After this digression, there was another effort to bring Mike back to the recital of his story.

"As I was er sayin'," said Mike, "the panter he was in 'mongst the dogs, an' thar they had it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, an' as I had nuthin but er butcher knife, an' it was er mighty thickety place for er fight an' er whoppin' cantankerous panter, I hollered for John Potter to cum an' shoot him. An' what do you think the tarnation feller said? Why, he didn't say nare er thing, but thar he was, with his gun on his shoulder, er humpin hisself an' er cuttin' through the woods like er blue streak, an' er makin' er straight shirt-tail for home! Sez I, 'Cum here, you son of er gun!' But he didn't pay no more 'tention to me than if he was deaf. I felt wolfish, you may depend, but I didn't cuss none—I never cusses—but ef I didn't *think*, d——n it, you can shoot *me*!"

Here Mike drew a very long breath, and seemed solicitous to dodge the catastrophe. But being further importuned, after refreshing himself with a horn of "red-eye" he proceeded.

"Well, as I said before, thar was I with er empty gun, an' thar was the panter in among the dogs, gwine it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, dog er slappin' um about like dirt, an' the durndest fight you ever did see! When I see that my dander was up, I tell you; so I draw'd my ole butcher knife an' come down out'n that tree in er hurry, an' when I got down

the first thing I did,—what do you think I did? Why, I blow'd my horn for the dogs, an' struck er straight shirt-tail for home, an' the dogs they foller'd. When I got thar, what do you think I see? Why, thar was that good for nuthin' suck-egg son uv er gun, John Potter, with my Sal settin' on his knee er kissin' him, an' he er tellin' her 'bout me an' the panter, an' er larfin fit to split! I didn't say er word,—'twasn't no time for jabberin'—but I tell you what I did do. I kinder grit my teeth an' pitched into him, an' I pledge you my word, I lammed him plum ouden' his shirt!

“John Potter staid at my house er long time arter that, an' courted my darter, an' I gin her to him; but he never said panter to me since that lickin' I gin him—you can go your pile on it!”

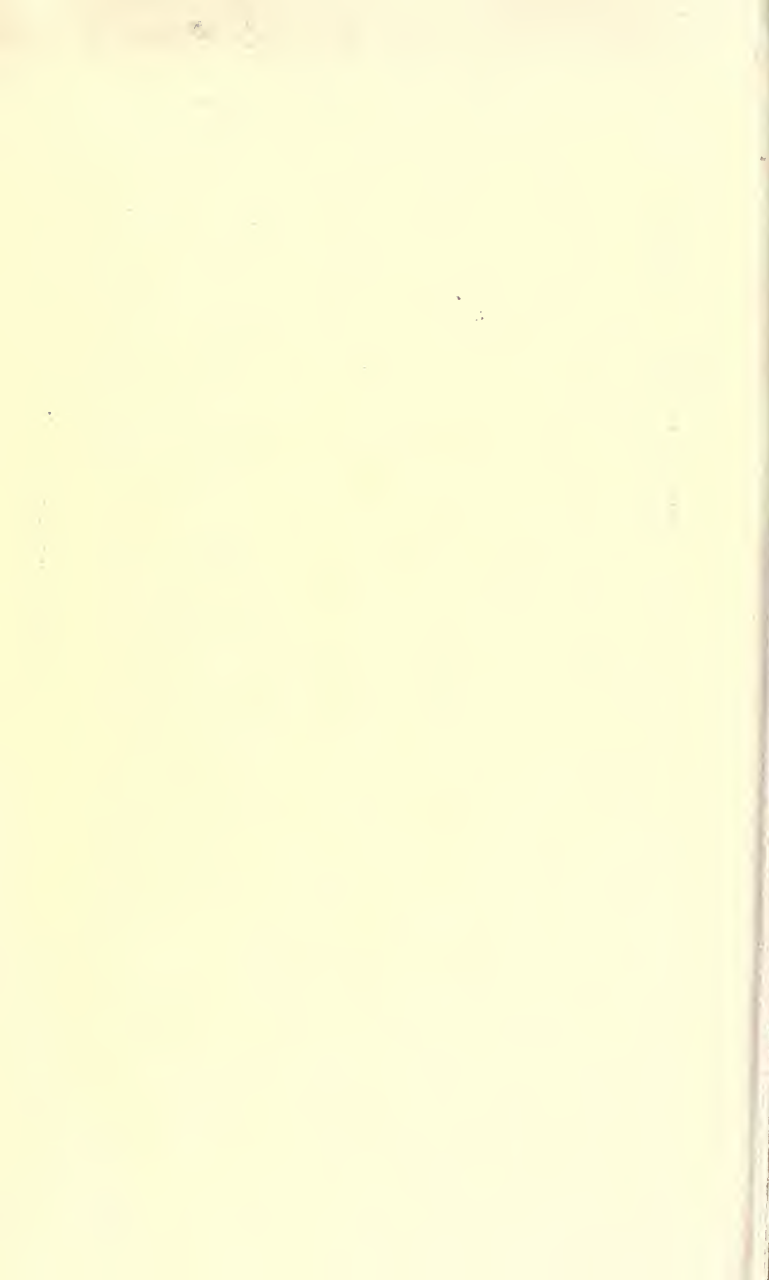
THE END.

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